

## The Armchair Survivalists – Chapter 1 – Talking About It

If the truth were known about Gary, Ron and Clarence, real Survivalists probably would have laughed. How prepared were they really? Ron had a six-months supply of all of his drugs; it filled a cabinet. Gary had at least 3-months of most everything he took. He had to depend on the doctor to supply him with physician's samples. Some of the pills he took cost \$5.75 per pill! And, naturally, there were drugs that he couldn't get samples of and they were expensive, like Zoloft. The really cheap drugs that he didn't take many of like Xanax and Vicodin were heavily stockpiled. Vicodin was \$20 per hundred and Xanax only \$10 per hundred.

When it came to firearms, Ron had been on a buying binge and had bought so many used handguns and rifles that he'd had to convert his storage shed to keep his guns. He'd had to buy a second gun safe, too. Gary had 2 handguns, a Nazi war-prize .32 auto and a .22 Saturday night special, but not a single rifle or shotgun. He'd had guns, many guns. At one time, his collection had included 23 rifles, shotguns and handguns. But his and Sharon's champagne appetites and their beer budget had seen the firearms sold off one-by-one. Clarence had a .38 special and a shotgun, for sure; Gary wasn't sure about the rest.

Food was a whole different story. Gary and Sharon had run low on food too many times when visitors to their home turned into live-in houseguests. First it had been Tony and Karen. Gary had offered to put them up for a couple of nights three years before and that had turned into a yearlong stay. Finally, to get rid of Tony and Karen, Gary offered their daughter Amy accommodations for a couple of months. Two months became two years.

Gary and Sharon had never taken Nancy Reagan's advice and learned to just say, "No." Finally a fight between Sharon and Amy had seen them move out, but they too had champagne appetites and a beer budget. Instead of renting an apartment for \$600 a month, Amy and Udell had rented a house for \$1,000 a month.

Anyway, Gary and Sharon had enough food on the shelves to carry them for at least 2 months, maybe more. There was a 25-pound bag of rice and 30 or more pounds of beans. There were canned vegetables and coffee; maybe not a balanced diet, but they would eat.

Ron and Linda weren't into the food thing. They had Linda's son John living with them. John worked as a guard on the JAG set and paid them room and board. They also had Linda's son Kevin living with them. Kevin, a Type I diabetic, was into partying and drinking and probably drugs. Ron and Linda had lost count of the number of times they'd thrown Kevin out.

Clarence and Lucy lived alone, but they weren't into keeping a lot of food on hand, either. Our three families did the California thing a lot of the time and ran to the store for

food for a meal.

Clarence was born in 1939, Ron in 1941 and Gary in 1943. Part of the Baby-Boomers or just on the cusp, they were in their sixties and not in the best of health. The three men smoked, only Clarence had cut down when he'd had bypass surgery. The jury was out on whether he would succeed in stopping altogether. Clarence was a Type II diabetic and he was healing very slowly from the surgery to remove a vein from his leg.

The only reason Ron was alive was because he had gotten cancer. During the treadmill test they'd run prior to his cancer surgery, they had discovered that the blood vessels in his neck were 98% clogged and they had done emergency surgery to open them. How many people could claim that cancer had saved their life?

Gary was a Type II diabetic who had experienced a rapid onset of neuropathy in 1997. He wasn't all that careful with his diet and eventually had become insulin dependent. At least his heart seemed to be ok. He'd lost weight and watched his blood sugar, finally, having put the cart before the horse. He had developed cataracts and had the lenses replaced in his eyes, taking him from 20/3,000 vision to 20/20 vision in his left eye and 20/25 in his right. He could see for the first time since he was 12-years old. He needed glasses to read, but only then.

When it came to politics, the three men covered the conservative political spectrum. Ron was the most conservative of the three and subscribed to several publications out of Orange County. Clarence was the most liberal of the three and it was fun to hear Ron and him debating the conservative sides of the issues. Gary was somewhere in the middle, sometimes siding with Ron, and sometimes with Clarence. They both accused him of being wishy-washy but the truth of the matter was that Gary just took whatever position made the most sense to him.

Things had finally come to a head in the Olsen household during the spring of 2004. Gary sat Sharon down and bitterly complained that he was bringing in almost \$50 thousand dollars a year, before taxes, and couldn't even afford a rifle. To top it off, they needed a new car, too. They sat down and figured it out. Gary would sell off his large HP Printer and he could use the money for whatever his heart desired. They would put a down payment on a new import car and finance it over 3 years.

Gary got \$5,000 (50 cents on the dollar) for the HP Printer. His first purchase was a small 7kw generator and a manual transfer switch. The 50-amp generator would run the whole house except for the air conditioning. The electrician had gouged him pretty good for installing the manual transfer switch. He left a 5' pigtail hanging that would plug into the generator's large outlet.

Gary bought the optional generator cart and kept the generator on his patio. Bye-bye \$545. He finally had a chance to test it when a drunk hit a light pole on 47th street East and took down the power for 9 hours. He'd started the electric start generator, unplugged the charger and wheeled it to the side of the house where his fuse panel was

located. He plugged in the 3-pronged plug and twisted it, and then flipped the manual transfer switch. It worked like a charm. He had to refill the 7-gallon tank once and had shut down the generator briefly to do it. His computers never went down because of his two 500-watt UPS's.

Gary bought a Springfield Armory M1A standard rifle with a synthetic stock. That was \$1,300 plus tax and fees. He got his daughter-in-law to order 10 20-round magazines for the M1A and ship them to California; another \$450 gone. He splurged on a Remington 870 with the 20" barrel and magazine extension at Big Five. The Winchester 1300 was only \$20 less than the Remington and he didn't care one bit for the Mossberg even though it was \$100 cheaper than the Remington. He also splurged on the Winchester 9422. He truly loved lever action rifles and that little Winchester .22LR rifle.

When it came time to get a handgun, Gary bought a used S&W Chief's Special and had the gunsmith go through it. He had a set of Pachmayr grips from when he'd owned a Chief's Special before and two speed loaders. The stubby barrel wasn't much good past 50', at least not for Gary, but he figured that a handgun was a 7-yard weapon anyway. Besides he also had two old holsters for the Chief's Special, so he wouldn't need to buy any leather. There was just enough left of the \$5,000 to buy 2 bricks of .22LR, a 800-round case of surplus .308 ammo, 2 boxes of 158 grain SJHP, 2 boxes of 158 grain SJSP .38 ammo and a 250-round case of 3", 15-pellet 00 buckshot.

Gary and Sharon had settled for a year old KIA. He hated the Korean piece of junk, but at least it was low mileage and good on gas. Gary tried to get Ron and Clarence to put in generators, but they just didn't believe they would ever need them. Besides, if their power went out, they could put the stuff out of their freezers in Gary's freezer. The only power outages in the past 6 or 7 years had been when a car accident took out a transformer anyway.

Ron had a membership to a shooting range and they went every week to shoot. Gary wasn't any Annie Oakley, and neither was Ron. They could punch holes in the full-sized silhouettes at 100-yards with their rifles and at 50' with their handguns and that was good enough for them.

If Gary and Sharon had a real shortcoming in their short-term survival preparations, it was in the water and fuel departments. Gary had six large, new trash barrels with lids that he hoped to be able to fill if TSHTF. The generator burned gasoline and Gary had the 7 gallons in the tank and 7 more 5-gallon cans of gas. It was only enough to run the generator for about 36 – 40 hours, depending on the load. He'd stabilized the gas with PRI-G, and used it in his lawnmower. He ran the generator every Monday afternoon for 15 minutes to make sure it would run if he needed it. From the time he got the generator in July until October when he cut back mowing the lawn he'd only used 4 gallons of gas.

Gary wasn't happy about the fuel situation and he hunted around until he found a dealer who sold new fuel oil tanks. The 300-gallon tanks weren't intended for gasoline and Palmdale City Ordinances absolutely prohibited storing that much fuel on a Residential

lot, but Gary had the tank installed next to his shed and started dumping his gas cans into the tank.

Several trips to Sam's Club and \$575 later, he had 300 gallons in the tank. He added the recommended amount of PRI-G and refilled his 5-gallon cans one last time. His gasoline storage wasn't fancy by any means. The fuel oil tank was mounted to the slab and anchor straps went over the top. He could only hope it would holdup through an earthquake. But, he had 335-gallons of stabilized gasoline.

When he'd used ½ of his ammo, Gary bought the same quantities he'd bought the first time. He was gradually building his supply. The fall of 2004 had seen Gary and Sharon discarding boxes of books from their garage. Maybe someday they could park the car in the garage again. They brought the shelves in from the shed and reassembled the steel shelving that used to line both walls of the garage.

Every month when they went to Sam's Club and Costco, they added a little more food. Realizing that the food wouldn't keep indefinitely, Gary bought some of the oxygen absorbers and picked up some white pails from the donut shop. They cleaned the pails and refilled them with beans, rice, flour, macaroni, sugar, oatmeal, pancake mix and all kinds of staples. It was as homemade and frugal as one could be, but they were building their food supplies.

Ron and Clarence began to suspect that Gary had lost touch with reality what with his illegal gasoline storage, the generator and the growing food supplies. Gary just kept adding on, increasing their supply of bandages, medicines and food; he was a man with a mission.

When they had more money, Gary bought Sharon a Ruger Mini-14 and got Mary to buy some PMI 30-round magazines for the rifle. He figured that Sharon could use his .32 Sauer und Sohn and she didn't want a shotgun, so they were set on guns. The only food concession Gary had had to make revolved around, of all things, pinto beans. Sharon hated pinto beans. Maybe hate wasn't a strong enough term. He'd had to start buying Great Northern beans at Smart and Final Iris to placate her.

Finally at least one of our three armchair survivalists was nearly ready. He kept adding a 5-gallon can of gasoline every month and some food. Every other month or so, he added another case of .308 or .223 or boxes of .38 special or .357 magnum and bricks of .22LR ammunition.

In the fiction he wrote, Gary talked about adding things in bunches like he had a printing press churning out \$100 bills. In real life, it was a gradual process and some months they added nothing at all. Back in April of 2004 someone had commented on the Frugal Squirrel Forum about real survivalists being in great physical shape, and a variety of things.

Gary hadn't disagreed, but he couldn't make the neuropathy go away or the diabetes. He guessed that it meant that he was an armchair survivalist. He couldn't put 10 rounds in the X ring at 300-yards, either. Hell, he could hardly see the target at 300-yards. Gary wasn't sure that he could *shoot first and ask questions later* either, he'd never been put to the test.

Ron and Linda finally, finally started to put back extra food. It was hard for them; Kevin ate them out of house and home. The more they bought, the more he ate. Finally, they started storing their survival food in Ron's gun shed. Kevin never went there; he might get stuck with cleaning out his Raccoon's cage. Kevin had gotten the baby Raccoon back when, but then it grew up, Kevin had moved out one more time and left the Raccoon with Ron and Linda. Just what Ron needed, another chore. They spent more money feeding the Raccoon than Gary and Sharon spent on Missy and the six cats.

Ron and Gary talked about what it would take to get Clarence aboard the program. The real problem was that Clarence was one of the most laid back individuals either of them had ever known. Ron said that he'd only ever seen Clarence uptight in all the years he'd known him. One day, Ron told Gary, he had seen Clarence sitting looking like he'd lost his last friend.

Clarence had denied anything was wrong at first but when Ron pressed Clarence finally admitted that he was afraid his nephew Fred was going to move in with him and his wife. Fred had Cushing's syndrome, a form of osteoporosis associated with the excessive use of Prednisone. Fred had fallen off a curb and broken his pelvis and was permanently crippled and unable to work. Fred had been living with his mother and had a suit going against the Social Security Administration. Fred and his mother, Clarence's sister, had had a falling out and Clarence was worried sick that Fred was going to move in with him and Lucy.

It turned out later that Fred had won a settlement Social Security and his \$40,000 settlement allowed him to get his own apartment. Unfortunately, that Prednisone that Fred was still taking, or some other factor, it never was clear, resulted in Fred dying about 6 months after the settlement, at age 42. Clarence had been fine after that until his heart attack.

But it never rains that it doesn't pour. As Clarence was being taken to the Recovery Room after his successful bypass, he'd suffered a stroke. Except for his leg healing slowly, Clarence was fine now. Clarence, by the way, pronounced Gary's name, Gah-ree, dragging it out. Gary and Fred had been pretty good friends and Gary even featured Fred and a made-up wife in his first novel, *The Ark*.

Finally, Gary and Ron decided that they wouldn't press Clarence; he had enough on his mind trying to get over the heart attack, stroke and the diabetes slowed healing of his leg. Ron and Linda continued to lay in what food they could and Gary and Sharon put up a little more, just in case, to help out Clarence and Lucy.

The summer, fall and winter of 2004 had been tough on all three men and their families. Gary and Sharon were pinching pennies getting their survival preparations finished. It had been a long, hot summer and their utility bills had been out-of-sight. Ron and Linda had a little more disposable income and they were catching up in the food department. They would have been a lot closer if Ron had lain off buying guns for a couple of months, but even so, they were getting there. Ron had lots of guns and little ammo whereas Gary had few guns and lots of ammo.

Gary's son Derek had made it back from Kosovo without getting his tail shot off and things were looking up for the men. Clarence had finally healed up after a nine-month recovery. The men even made some plans. Plan A, as they jokingly called it, had Ron making a desperate trip to H & E or Costco or anywhere he could get a generator. Gary and Sharon would just hunker down, conditions permitting. Ron and Gary agreed that they would both offer to take Clarence and Lucy in if a situation developed. From the looks of the news, a situation could develop at any time and that didn't even consider a natural disaster, like an earthquake.

Gary was dang glad he'd managed to get his guns bought when he did. For whatever reason, Kerry had managed to knock off Bush in the November 2004 election and it looked like the Assault Weapons ban was coming back with a vengeance. In his Inaugural address Kerry had said it was time to take back America from the lawless and would be lawless. The solution lay in the elimination of all of the non-sporting firearms around the country. His first act as President would be to introduce legislation aimed at reinstating the Assault Weapons ban. Semi-automatic weapons were weapons of war, he claimed and he would ban them completely except for the military and LEO's.

"Well Ronald," Gary said, "I read the President's speech in the LA Times. It looks like he's going to outlaw that Ruger 10/22 of yours."

"He'll never get a law passed that outlaws semi-automatic firearms," Ron insisted.

"If the Republicans still controlled Congress, I'd agree with you," Gary said, "But the war in Iraq undid Bush and the Republicans."

"What are we going to do if they manage to pass the new ban?" Ron wondered aloud. "I have 7 guns and 4 of the 7 are semi-auto's,"

Gary said, "I figure I have to find some way to hide them."

"Better do some figuring for me while you're at it," Ron lamented, "I have a bunch of semi-auto handguns."

"What I'm worried about is the ATF seizing gun dealer's logs and tracking down the guns," Gary reflected, "Except for the 2 guns my dad gave me, all of the guns I have are retail purchases."

“You can always claim that you sold them or something,” Ron suggested.

“Right and who is going to believe that I bought 5 guns and disposed of 4 of them within a year?” Gary asked. “Besides, I have all of those high capacity magazines I had Mary get me for the M1A and Sharon’s Mini-14. I’ll not only have the feds all over me, I’ll have the state of California charging me with a felony.”

“Not to change the subject, but the gunshop just got in 2 Garand’s,” Ron said. “She wants \$495 each for them.”

“Are they any good?” Gary asked.

“I checked them out pretty good,” Ron reported, “The stocks are pretty rough, but the actions are sound and the bores are clean. Not much wear in the barrels, either.”

“Well hell, what are we waiting for?” Gary asked, “If we’re going to get them, we’d better hurry. The last time she got in 2 Garand’s she sold them within a week.”

“They’re semi-auto Gar-Bear,” Ron cautioned.

“So? It just means I’ll have to hide 5 guns instead of 4,” Gary responded.

“I’m not going to buy one,” Ron said, “She has a real nice Winchester model 70 on the shelf. It’s a .30-06 and has a scope. Besides, it will be legal if the new ban passes.”

“I might just buy both of the Garand rifles,” Gary said. “Didn’t I see a bunch of that Korean Garand ammo in her store the last time we were in there?”

“She has half a pallet of the stuff,” Ron confirmed, “Good price on it too.”

The two men drove over to the gun shop. Ron was right, the Garand’s were rough on the exterior, but they showed little wear inside. Ron bought the model 70 and Gary popped for the 2 Garand’s. He spent as much on ammo as he did on the two rifles. Sharon was going to have a fit over that one. She’d been pretty clear that she thought they had enough guns when he’d gotten her the Mini-14. He wondered what she would come up with to compensate, a long armed quilting machine perhaps?

Sharon didn’t want a long armed quilting machine, they went for \$20,000, but there was this system that she could set her Viking in that allowed it to function sort of like a long armed machine and gee, it was only \$800. Gary said what the hell, he could have paid a grand apiece for the Garand’s, let her have the gadget what-cha-ma-call-it.

Ron and he still had the problem of hiding the guns. And now, he had to hide six, not four. At least it didn’t appear that the legislation would pass before the 10-day waiting period was up for him to pick up his rifles. Gary and Ron figured they would probably use metal detectors and sonar and every other modern gadget in their quest to seize

the weapons once they got on a roll. Where could they hide those guns? It had to be somewhere close and readily accessible. They stumbled around for a week trying to come up with something.

The three men were sitting on Gary's patio talking about nothing in particular when the subject of his slab came up. Gary pointed out that over in the northwest corner next to the house the slab was 9" thick. His neighbor, who had poured the slab, had a crank party the night before the pour and hadn't taken the time to properly grade the ground. Not only was the slab thick at that point, it had extra rebar in it. That gave Ron an idea and he went to Gary's garage and got a pick and a shovel. He started to dig into the lawn right where the shed slab and the main slab were the closest.

"What in the hell are you doing digging up my lawn?" Gary excitedly reacted.

"Well partner, you said the slab was 9" thick and full of extra rebar," Ron recapped, "That might be a good place to hide our guns."

"Ron, that ground is like concrete, you'll never get through it," Gary insisted.

It took them most of the day to dig a 4'x4' hole about 8' deep. It was pretty cold in Palmdale in January, but the ground wasn't frozen. They worked up a pretty good sweat despite the cold weather. They'd probably catch a cold. They used a pail and a rope to haul the dirt out of the hole and piled it on Gary's slab. It wasn't the most inconspicuous construction event in town.

The next day when he showed up, Ron had some 3/4" plywood and some 4"x4" posts. They started to tunnel under the slab towards the house. It took them 2 more days to dig a 3' wide tunnel barely 6' high up to where they hit the house foundation. The tunnel was heavily shored, as was the hole in the lawn. There was a pretty large pile of dirt on the slab, too. Ron got Gary to empty out his supply cabinet in the office and they wrestled the cabinet down the hole and to the end of the tunnel. The cabinet was taller than the tunnel and Ron had to dig out an extra 18" of dirt to allow them to stand the cabinet up.

"There you go partner," Ron said at the end of the third day, "Hidden gun storage."

"Yeah right, Ronald," Gary disabused his friend, "A pile of dirt as big as my shed; and how are you going to hide that hole in my lawn?"

"Gary, your back yard needs some work anyway," Ron said, "We can spread the dirt and seed it. Come spring, the dirt will disappear as if by magic."

"I still don't see how we're going to hide that hole Ronald," Gary retorted.

"Yeah Ron," Clarence butted in, "That hole is big!"



“Leave it to me guys,” Ron said. “Well, I’ve got to get home and get cleaned up. See you in the morning.”

Ron didn’t have any intention of hiding the hole per se; there was no way he could. He could make it hard to detect and then count on luck. He stopped by the lumberyard and picked up 2 2”x12” boards 20’ long and another sheet of ¾” OSB. They had 4”x4” posts left over, so he was good to go. He built two 4’ square flower boxes and dug into the east end of the lawn setting one about 6” deep in the soil. Then, he used the leftover posts and constructed a frame in the hole to rest the other flower box on. By the time he was done, you couldn’t tell one flower box from the other.

“It’s a shame about all the break-ins we’ve been having lately,” he said after they’d finished and were drink coffee in the kitchen.

“What break-ins?” Gary asked.

“Why the break-in you’re going to have next week partner where they steal your guns, TV, VCR and Sharon’s jewelry,” Ron said. “I’m going to have mine tomorrow night right after I move my guns to the cabinet in the hidey hole.”

“That will never work Ron,” Gary said, “We both have security systems.”

“Didn’t you ever forget to set the system when you left?” Ron asked.

“Rarely,” Gary responded. “But I guess that I could forget next week when we spend the night in LA.”

“What you going to LA for Gary?” Clarence asked.

“Haven’t figured that out yet Clarence,” Gary said, “I suppose so the thieves can break in and steal our stuff.”

The next day the men moved all of their weapons to the cabinet in the hidey-hole. Ron also moved his TV’s, stereo, VCR, DVD and Linda’s jewelry. Those opportunistic thieves must have been druggies, they only stole things they could unload quickly, the police concluded.

Filing a false police report was a crime and Ron wouldn’t have done it if the situation hadn’t called for desperate measures. He didn’t compound the crime by filing an insurance claim. Besides, his company required certain items to be scheduled and extra premiums to be paid before coverage was provided, like Linda’s jewelry and his guns.

They picked up their new used rifles the following week and the thieves struck again. Maybe they had been watching the gun shop, Gary suggested. He and Sharon had stayed the night in LA because he had back to back doctor’s appointments and that was too much driving. Palmdale was experiencing a rash of burglaries, apparently. Gary

didn't file an insurance claim either. His policy had exclusions if you had an inactivated alarm system. Having the alarm system had cut his premiums, but there was that clause about the system having to be active...

The men waited a while and returned their TV's and other electronics to their homes. Their soon to be illegal guns remained in the hidey-hole. Kerry got the legislation passed and made a big deal about signing it into law. It was now illegal to own a semi-automatic weapon of any description in the United States, even the lowly .22 rifles. It was the strangest thing, too. In the days leading up to the passage of the new ban, the US was struck by a wave of burglaries, some reported, some not. Thousands of people lost their semi-automatic firearms to thieves. Some folks lost them in the river doing some late season hunting.

There was no way the ATF had enough people to seize the semi-automatic firearms quickly. That gave a lot of people the opportunity to find somewhere to secrete their arms. What the ATF was able to do was to seize the records of gun shops and copy them. They provided the copies to the LEO's in the cooperative states like Maryland, Illinois and California. The south was going to be a problem. Someone had said that there were almost more guns per acre in the south than mosquitoes. The disarming of America had begun.

The gunshops practically sold out of .223, .308, 7.62x39mm and M1 Garand ammo overnight. Most states still didn't record sales of ammunition. And some states had Constitutions, which seemed to be in direct opposition to the new federal law. The stage was set for a revolution. Our Vietnam hero President then proceeded to withdraw our troops from Afghanistan and Iraq, asserting that the war on terror was a losing battle. His popularity plummeted in the polls driven first by the new firearms law and second by his own Vietnam. Millions of Americans wanted to march on Washington and lynch him.

Movements sprung up around the country. Fueled by a burning hatred of liberals and desire to return America to a century before when gun laws made sense and America had a President who spoke softly and carried a big stick, Americans began to form cells of dissidents. TV was a great teacher, you just had to adjust the improbable scenarios on TV to real life and they worked just fine.

And what of our 3 armchair survivalists in Palmdale? They slowly replaced their stolen firearms with legal firearms in the same calibers like .308 Remington 700's and .223 bolt-action rifles. They no longer had to hide their ammunition. Unable to practice with their MBR's and Assault rifles; they nevertheless practiced with their legal firearms.

The new law provided for a fee for each semi-automatic firearm turned in, \$100. The reward for reporting someone who kept an illegal firearm was set at \$10,000. Some of those liberal type folks couldn't tell one gun from another and the LEO's were kept busy just busting in on people who owned only a pump shotgun or a bolt-action rifle. The great weapons grab was going nowhere fast. And, those semi-automatic shotguns? Illegal! The government was spawning hate as they seized hunting arms of all kinds. Yes

sir, that Remington 1100 shotgun and the Ruger 10/22 had suddenly become dangerous Assault Weapons.

## The Armchair Survivalists – Chapter 2 – The Big Grab

Some states were quicker than others to react to the new law. Within hours of its signing, authorities in Massachusetts began to seize the semi-automatic weapons. Their task was made easier by state laws that required everyone who owned firearms to be licensed. In a matter of days, the state had seized all of the semi-automatic firearms that they knew about. The home of the first shots fired in the American Revolution fell victim to a gross confiscation of firearms. Did they get all of the semi-autos? Does a brown cow give chocolate milk? Not hardly in either case. A bastion of liberalism, Massachusetts still had its conservatives and gun owners who hadn't bothered to get firearms licenses in the first place. And those that did couldn't produce the semi-auto weapons.

The story wasn't much different in Maryland and Illinois. The government got the guns of the sheeple; but the patriotic, God fearing rugged individualists among them still had their weapons. The NRA had often uttered the slogan that *when guns were outlawed, only outlaws would have guns*. Did that mean that only criminals had guns or that the government had created a whole new class of criminals, the patriot who believed absolutely in his or her right to keep and bear arms? The three old men in Palmdale believed the latter.

Already sparks were beginning to fly around the country. LEO's were coming under fire from people who had no intention of giving up their firearms. It was absolutely unhealthy to be an ATF agent, where had all of those snipers come from? Down in the south where there were as many rifles as mosquitoes, the new law was seen by most as the first steps in the second war of northern aggression and the good old boys weren't giving up their arms.

Out in California, the LAPD couldn't even disarm the gangs and when they tried to disarm the public they hit a stonewall. Their motto of To Protect and Serve soon became To Duck and Run. The population was better armed than the many police agencies, despite California's draconian gun laws.

There were certain advantages to being old and infirm, too. The LA County Sheriff had been to Ron and Gary's homes already, but our boys just gave them a copy of the police reports of their burglaries. The Deputies never gave the men a second glance, mainly because Gary had dug out his walker from the garage and Ron was using a cane (borrowed it from Gary) to walk. From the looks of the two old men, they could barely get from the living room to the kitchen and they were no threat. The Deputies never even made it to Gary's back yard and his growing supply of gasoline went unnoticed.

The withdrawal from Afghanistan had gone relatively smoothly, but a lot of Americans and coalition forces died when they tried to withdraw from Iraq. Kerry blamed it all on Bush, after all, Bush had started the war he was only ending it. Most of the American public had no idea that the dispute was nearly 800+ years old and went back not to the first Gulf War but to the Crusades.

Muslims had never completely forgiven the westerner for invading their homeland centuries before. People like bin Laden had merely capitalized on the centuries old blood feud; they hadn't started it. One Muslim sect in England looked forward to when the Muslims would rule the world and there would be but one nation, the Nation of Islam.

Kerry was in a terrible position. There weren't enough federal law enforcement officers to implement the new Assault Weapons Ban. There were already too many firearms in the hands of the American public and lots of them were semi-automatic. He had tried to use the military to enforce the law, but a fast acting NRA sought an injunction citing Posse Comitatus and that effort failed.

Oh, the Appeals Court still had to hear the case and then the US Supreme Court, but the Attorney General flat told him he was going to lose. The soldiers weren't too keen on enforcing a law that they didn't like in the first place. They had been fighting and dying in a far off land to promote Democracy and here the President and Congress had effectively repealed a part of the Constitution.

The summer of 2004 had been hot, but the summer of 2005 proved to be even hotter. Everyone was running their air conditioners and the strain proved to be too much for America's electrical grid. First came the brownouts. Then came a blackout on the east coast. The blackout that hit the northeast lasted for over a week. It was worse than the outage of 2003 and tempers soared and then exploded, perhaps due to the sweltering heat.

It wasn't much better in California. Arnold soon found himself in the same position that former Governor Davis had been in. There was a shortage of power available to California. Rather than following the path that Davis had, Arnold allowed selective blackouts to be implemented.

Davis had tried to meet California's demands for power and had nearly bankrupted the state. Arnold ordered businesses to shut down instead and then permitted the utilities to blackout entire communities for 12-hour periods. Gary was forced, more than once, to fire up that generator of his. Ronald had been forced to implement Plan A and had shelled out a pretty penny for a generator. Clarence had gone with Ron and they had purchased the last two 7kw generators at Costco. Lacking transfer switches, the two men had been forced to run extension cords to keep their refrigerators and a few lamps plugged in.

With gasoline having hit a national average price of \$3.599 a gallon for unleaded regular, and having edged over \$4 a gallon in California, the three armchair survivalists were barely able to afford the gasoline to keep their generators running. Ron and Clarence had a hard time finding 5-gallon gas cans and it cost them \$20 per can to fill them. All three men soon learned to run those generators one hour in three and then one hour in six and finally one hour in twelve. Gary's stored gasoline was approaching 6-months in

age and he supplied gasoline to Ron and Clarence so that he could replace the old with new.

President Kerry seemed oblivious to the problems facing America. The troops were finally home, but he was forced to declare martial law to restore order in the northeast. He was still trying to push his socialist agenda through Congress, and Senators Kennedy, Clinton and Schumer were pressing him hard for even more programs and more legislation. The Middle East had turned into a powder keg, too. Islamic fundamentalists had forced a Shi'ite led Islamic government into power in Iraq and a civil war between the Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims was in full swing.

At the latest OPEC meeting, the members had voted to further reduce production and raise the prices of oil even higher. Jordan's King Abdullah had been assassinated and Jordan was poised to join in on the war on terrorism. Ariel Sharon had ignored the advice of the Knesset and had forged ahead, assassinating Arafat. The Palestinians had gone into a full revolt and Israel was having trouble fighting them because they moved into the Israeli populations and the soldiers couldn't shoot for fear of killing their own countrymen.

Throughout the United States, ATF agents and local authorities tried to enforce the new Assault Weapons Ban and more and more ATF agents had died. Sales of ammunition were so good that Ammoman and other online vendors couldn't keep up with the demand. President Kerry, concerned by the sheer volume of interstate sales of the surplus ammunition had issued an Executive Order banning interstate shipments of the military surplus ammunition.

"This is a fine situation," Ron complained, "Four dollar gas, no electricity half the time, and did you see the sign at Albertson's?"

"You mean the 5% surcharge on the price of all groceries due to the rising fuel costs?" Gary asked. "Yeah I saw it. We're avoiding buying anything we don't absolutely have to have."

"Gary, how much gasoline do you have left?" Clarence asked.

"I'm down to 100 gallons of the old fuel Clarence, but I have 100 gallons of new fuel in gas cans," Gary explained. "I'm beginning to believe that the 300-gallon tank wasn't such a good idea. I thought that the stabilized gas would last longer than six-months. Maybe I should have bought a diesel generator."

"Wouldn't have made much difference Gar-Bear," Ron commented, "Stabilized diesel is only good for a year. If you want a permanent backup electrical system that's hydrocarbon based, you have to go with propane."

"What about natural gas?" Gary asked.

“That’s fine until they cut off the gas supply,” Ron explained, “Then where are you?”

“My neighbor from across the street came by offering me almost double what I paid for the generator,” Gary said, “If I could find a propane vapor/Natural gas generator, I’d be tempted to switch and sell him the gas generator.”

“I saw an ad in the Recycler for a used Onan RS 12000,” Clarence said. “Maybe you ought to call the guy and see if he’s sold it yet.”

“Maybe that’s the one I’ve been looking at on the Internet,” Gary said, “It runs on both Natural Gas and on propane vapor. How much did he want for it?”

“\$8,000 Gary,” Clarence responded. “More than I could afford.”

“Ron, would it be possible to hook the thing up so that it automatically switched to propane in the event that the natural gas went out?” Gary asked.

“I suppose so,” Ron replied.

“I’m going to call the guy right now,” Gary said, “Clarence, do you have his number?”

“Right here Gary,” Clarence said handing Gary a slip of paper.

Gary called the guy down in Littlerock. The \$8,000 price included the standby generator which hadn’t been used much, an automatic transfer switch and a 550-gallon propane tank (empty). It was cash and carry and it was the one Gary had been looking at on the net (model 12GHAB/101).

Gary asked the guy if he could hold the unit long enough for him to get to the bank. The guy told Gary that the first person that showed up with \$8,000 cash owned the unit. Gary checked his bank accounts. There was enough money in the Iowa account to buy the generator, but his Wells Fargo account was a little light. He went across the street and asked his neighbor if he still wanted the generator. He sure did and Gary sold him the generator, manual transfer switch and the 300-gallon tank for cash. He told his neighbor to help himself; he was scurrying to buy a replacement.

Fortunately Ron had enough money in his account to put up what Gary was short in his Wells Fargo account and Gary gave Ron a check on his Iowa account. With cash in hand, they headed to Littlerock.

If they had been an hour later, they probably wouldn’t have gotten the generator. They had Ron’s pickup to haul the tank and Chris’s pickup to haul the generator. The fella had a 5 pound bottle of propane hooked up to the generator so that he could start it and demonstrate that it ran. It fired right up and Gary said he would take it.

He could see that the propane tank was old, but Ron checked it out and said it looked good to him. Gary gave the man the \$8,000 and the man used his tractor and loader to put the empty tank on Ron's pickup. The automatic transfer switch was in a box and it went into the cab of Chris's pickup. The generator was next and with it loaded the men were ready to return to Moon Shadows. Just as they were leaving more people pulled in to see about buying the generator.

When they got back to the tract, they had several problems to resolve. Where should they put the tank and the generator? How were they going to get them off the pickups? Who would wire in the new automatic transfer switch? How were they going to come up with the automatic gas transfer system?

The tank and generator ended up on the small patch of grass next to the driveway in the front yard. They had to dig out some lawn to make a level spot for the tank and several neighbors helped them manhandle it off the pickup. Gary wondered how much the tank weighed filled, because it sure was heavy empty.

The generator came with its own base and they set it on the sidewalk right next to the electrical panel. His neighbor had already removed the manual transfer switch, so Gary mounted the new transfer switch in the same place. He pulled the main fuses and wired in the switch. Danged fool didn't even know that he was working with live wires, but he was careful and never found out until later.

They hooked the generator up to the natural gas line (Dick did that for them, he worked for the gas company) and the new generator was ready to go. His neighbor had drained the remaining 100 gallons of old gas from the 300-gallon tank and had already moved it. They had Gary's old system up and running before Gary, Ron, Clarence and Dick had Gary's new system up.

AmeriGas brought Gary 500 gallons of propane. The driver at first refused to fill the tank, claiming it was too close to the house. They moved the tank 3' and finally had 500 gallons of propane. Ron knew the driver from when Ron had worked at AmeriGas and he engaged the driver in conversation, perhaps distracting him. Apparently the driver assumed that Gary had a permit for the tank; he didn't and had no intentions of getting one. Dick came back that night with a section of flexible high-pressure gas line and a commercial pressure-activated mechanical transfer switch. Two hours later the entire propane Vapor/Natural Gas powered generator installation was completed.

"Clarence, I owe you a big one," Gary said after the new installation was done. "I probably couldn't have found a new generator like that in a year of looking."

"You're welcome Gary," Clarence beamed. "You may be sorry though, I can't afford much more gas for my generator. Lucy and I may have to move in with Sharon and you."



“What in the hell are we going to do about this situation that’s coming about here in this country?” Ron asked.

“What do you mean Ron?” Gary asked.

“You mean you haven’t heard?” Ron half shouted, “They haven’t even gotten the riot calmed down in New York and Watt’s blew up this morning.”

“What do you mean blew up? Was there an explosion?” Gary asked.

“You could say that partner,” Ron shook his head, “It’s the Rodney King riot all over again. The whole south LA region is going up in flames and the LAPD can’t handle it.”

“What’s new about that Ron?” Clarence asked. “They couldn’t handle the ’65 riot or the Rodney King riot.”

“Arnold has called in the CNG,” Ron explained, “But the rioters seem to be better armed than the Guard.”

“I’ve been so busy concentrating on getting the new generator up and running I haven’t even had the TV on,” Gary said, “Tell me more.”

“You know about that situation in New York City that came up last week because of the power outage, right?” Ron asked.

“You mean where Kerry had to declare martial law?” Gary asked.

“Yep. Anyway, it’s been so flippin’ hot in LA that Watts finally boiled over too,” Ron said. “I don’t think it’s a racial thing at all. It’s just that the heat and the lack of electricity have frayed nerves to the point where it exploded.”

“What set it off?” Gary asked.

“Who knows?” Clarence replied, “Ron’s right Gary, it’s just the heat and no air conditioning. Plus the unemployment rising due to the layoff’s the blackouts and the fuel shortage have been causing.”

“I did catch Aaron Brown on CNN last night,” Gary said, “He didn’t say anything about a LA riot.”

“Happened today Gary,” Clarence said.

“Anyway, Brown was talking about the situation in the Middle East,” Gary said, “It looks like Jordan is going to invade Iraq. And the Palestinians are raising so much hell in Israel that Israel is asking for American help.”

“That ain’t likely to happen,” Ron said, “Kerry can’t spare the military to fight overseas, even if he wanted to. Arnold already asked him for federal troops because the CNG can’t handle the riot.”

“Already?” Gary asked surprised, “And it just broke out today? Kerry does seem to have his hands full.”

“Oh, it gets better Gar-Bear,” Ron said, “A southern survivalist group attacked an ATF/FEMA convoy and killed or wounded the whole bunch.”

“More of that new Assault Weapons ban fighting, huh?” Gary reflected.

“It’s getting pretty serious out there Gary,” Clarence added, “Americans have had enough of the feds and the states stealing their rights one at a time. I believe that we have a new Revolution brewing.”

“It’s about time if you ask me,” Gary smiled, “Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition.”

“The thing is Gar-Bear,” Ron warned, “If we get embroiled in another revolution or a civil war, it will leave America wide open to terrorist attacks.”

“I hadn’t thought about that Ron,” Gary admitted, “It sounds like the country is in deep crap.”

If Gary only knew how deep, he would have been shocked. From the moment Kerry had announced he was withdrawing from Iraq, the French and Russians began to raise hell in the UN. Apparently there had been some conflicts of interest (bribes) pertaining to the food for oil program and the US Congressional investigation was continuing. The French and Russians were objecting to the US withdrawal because the US had not succeeded in placing a stable government into place in Iraq.

Having failed to block the US invasion, the two countries, sometimes joined by Germany, had resisted UN participation in resolving the post war issues. When the US, e.g., Kerry, had finally admitted they couldn’t resolve the problems without the UN’s help, the French and Russians then claimed the US couldn’t withdraw. Kerry had ignored the UN, much as Bush had, and pulled out our troops anyway. Because of the Iraqi civil war, the UN still hadn’t stepped in to resolve the problem. Only a massive bombing campaign had allowed the US to withdraw with the Navy and Air Force flying thousands of sorties to cover the withdrawal.

Now the UN was complaining about the US participation in the Balkans. President Kerry had finally ordered the US troops out of the Balkans, too. If the UN disliked George W. Bush, they positively hated President John Kerry. Most of the US troops in the Balkans were National Guard units and the families were very happy to have them coming home. Because the troops had recently rotated into the Balkans, Kerry kept them on active duty, supplementing the US armed forces trying to bring order to America.

He lost another few percentage points of popularity in the polls. Just six months in office, Kerry had succeeded in alienating a majority of the American population. And, the Patriots among the population wanted him out of office, no matter what it took. If the election had been held in late July, early August of 2005, George W. Bush would have won in a landslide.

The New York and California riots were just the first two in what became a riot filled summer. Federal troops were shuttled here and there, barely containing one situation before another broke out. Kerry was spending more on the home front than Bush had spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He introduced legislation to increase taxes sharply, especially on the higher income members of American society. The Republican tried to block the passage of the bill in both the House and the Senate, but the Democrats were able to muster 63 votes and cut off the filibuster in the Senate. Suddenly, some very rich people became very uneasy.

Back in the Antelope Valley, those militia groups that had gone underground when the population boom occurred in the '80's and '90's suddenly became more of a presence. They were well armed, having armed themselves before the Assault Weapons ban of 1994 and having totally ignored the new California laws.

And what they didn't have, they could get from members of their organizations that had moved to Arizona and Nevada, especially Nevada. There they were, out in the desert, practicing military maneuvers as they had in the seventies and early eighties. The three armchair survivalists talked about joining them, but decided that they were just too old and lame to fit in.

They were getting by pretty good, too. Switching over to propane had been a Godsend for Gary. A wooden fence was erected around the propane tank, early on. Fortunately, he hadn't had to use the propane because the natural gas just kept coming. His summer gas bill soon became more than his winter gas bill, but it was almost cheaper to run the generator than use electricity from Southern California Edison.

They were down to Gary's 20 cans of gas and Ron and Clarence each had 10. They put the old gas in their cars and refilled the cans, adding PRI-G (which worked just fine if you followed the directions). By September, the electrical crisis had seemed to pass and the riots that plagued America were cooling off with the cooler temperatures. There were occasional brown outs, on hot days, but the Governor no longer had to maintain the rolling blackouts. This put people back to work and that probably helped with the unrest as much as the cooler weather did.

President Kerry finally released the National Guard troops from active duty. His popularity didn't go up as much as keeping them on duty has caused it to drop. Two things were going on in the country in the fall of 2005. In addition to the various plots hatched

by the Patriots to bring the government down, wealthy individuals began to funnel money into the fledgling militia movements. After the bloodiest summer in recorded history, the Middle East appeared to be settling down too and this affected America. The Shi'ite majority in Iraq overwhelmed the Sunni minority and Iraq became a Shi'ite dominated Fundamentalist Islamic country the same as Iran.

The Israelis and the Palestinians were still going at it with neither group making any headway. A Palestinian would bomb an Israeli target and the Israelis would kill some more Palestinians. All of the Palestinian terrorist organizations had been forced to keep their leadership a secret. With the tentative peace in Iraq came a new movement, devoted to making the US pay for the perceived excesses of Iraqi Freedom.

The core of the organization was a group of Shi'ites who were devotees of Moqtada al-Sadr, the Najaf cleric who had caused the Americans so much grief in 2004. The Americans had finally put down the insurrection in Najaf in late 2004, but the anger burned in their Muslim hearts. The US had also pounded the insurrections in Fallujah into submission, but the cost had been high and the Sunni Muslim resistance also bore the US a grudge.

They had little in common, these Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims, except for their hatred of Americans and everything American. They banded together in a common cause, setting their differences aside momentarily. The temporary truce was arranged by Iran; they too had an axe to grind with the Americans. They were joined by members of Hamas, the PFLP and Taliban from Afghanistan, with Iran orchestrating the whole show. Carefully forged identities allowed the over 5,000 would be terrorists to slowly infiltrate the US on student Visas. It was a slow, long project preparing the identity papers and backgrounds. It took them until the fall of 2006 just to move the 5,000 people to the US.

In Palmdale, Ron, Gary and Clarence were happy to see Kerry release the fuel reserves forcing the price of gasoline down to 2.749 per gallon. Given no other choice, Americans had been forced to unload their gas guzzling SUV's and opt for cars that gave 40 or more miles per gallon. If you wanted a SUV, the fall of 2005 through the summer of 2006 was the time to buy one. The car dealers couldn't give them away. With the lowering of the fuel prices, the grocery stores removed the delivery surcharge on food and the men restocked their food supplies. They had been forced to use some of the food just to survive for a time when the surcharge had reached 15%.

The three men had developed a side business that might interest some readers. One of Ron's neighbors had a Browning Hi-Power and Ron bought it off the books for pennies on the dollar. The man figured it was just a matter of time before the ATF caught up with him and rather than having the gun seized and get nothing and rather than turning the gun in for the measly \$100, he had sold it to Ron for \$350 cash. The gal who ran the gun shop that Ron had frequented so much in the past happened to mention to Ron that she wished she could risk some illegal activity; dozens of people were trying to sell her semi-automatic handguns, shotguns and rifles.

Ron perked up at the news and told her he knew someone who was flaunting the law, she should check with the people and if they still wanted to sell those guns, these guys he knew might buy them. It had to be strictly hush-hush, he told her, and the guys might come back on him if something went wrong.

Yeah right! The guys he knew were none other than the three old Geezers, Tom, Dick and Harry, aka Gary, Ron and Clarence. They paid cash and asked no questions. The transactions were conducted at the Palmdale city parks. They inspected the weapons quickly and if it looked like it could be made to shoot, offered pennies on the dollar to the faint of heart, would be survivalists who suddenly were more afraid of the law than the loss of their freedoms.

Anyone who fit that category didn't deserve to own a firearm anyway. They became known by many as *the money men* because they gave no names, simply stating a price. The guy with the glass eye became known as Mr. 300, the tall black guy as Mr. *that's too much* and the crippled guy as Mr. *knock off a hundred and you have a deal*.

No one had any idea where the guns disappeared to either. The ATF caught wind of the transactions and Mr. 300 was tentatively identified as Ron Green. But Green only had a couple of bolt-action rifles and a revolver and believe me, the ATF searched.

Then someone else suggested that Gary Olsen might be Mr. *knock off a hundred and you have a deal*. One of the ATF agents remembered Olsen; he was that jerk in Palmdale who had his Garand's stolen. They hadn't believed him then and they didn't know that they believed him now. But a search of his home and a check of his back yard with ground penetrating radar had failed to reveal the presence of any weapons.

They tried metal detectors on his slab, but it had so much rebar in it, that effort failed, too. They decided to keep an eye on the two men, Mr. Green and Mr. Olsen. They really sat up and took notice when Mr. Green and Mr. Olsen turned out to be best friends. Then a tall slender black man showed up at Olsen's house. Could he be Mr. *that's too much*?

A subsequent investigation disclosed that the third man was named Clarence Rawlings. A check of their records revealed that Rawlings had purchased a .38 caliber revolver and a 12-gauge pump shotgun a number of years before. They got a search warrant and checked out Clarence and Lucy's home. All they found was the Winchester model 1300 shotgun and his S&W model 64 .38 special revolver. So much for Mr. Rawlings, but if he was a friend of Green and Olsen, he should be watched too.

"Gary," Clarence said, "That flippin' ATF was by and searched my house this morning."

"Got me the other day too, Clarence and Ron a couple of days before that," Gary replied. "Someone has a big mouth. We're going to have to shut it down for a while."

"I think I was followed over here," Clarence said, "Come here and look out the window. See that car over there in front of your neighbor's house? It followed me all the way over here."

"See that car across the street and down a ways with the guy sitting in it?" Gary asked. "He's my watchdog."

The doorbell rang and Gary let Ron in.

"Did they tail you too?" Gary asked.

"Dumb SOBs," Ron muttered, "Where do they get these ATF agents anyway? I spotted him when I walked out of the house."

"Well, they might as well be comfortable," Gary said, "I'm going to take them some iced tea."

"What! Are you out of your mind?" Ron asked.

"No. I saw it in a movie once and have been dying to do it to someone," Gary laughed.

Gary took the agents the iced tea. They took it but didn't drink it afraid they were being poisoned. It was warm on June 17th 2006 and Gary kept Ron and Clarence well into the day. Every so often they looked out the window. The agents were sitting there pretending not to watch. Finally the cars left. Ron and Clarence hadn't gotten a block from Gary's when they picked up new tails. Ron stopped his car and got out. He walked back to the agent's car and knocked on the window. "I'm going to Albertson's and then home," he told the agent. Ron had seen the same movie.

Clarence had spotted his tail, too. He just shook his head at the money the government was wasting following him. The market for used semi-automatic weapons dried up in the Antelope Valley the summer of 2006. Tom, Dick and Harry went back to being Gary, Ron and Clarence. Finally the ATF had bigger fish to fry and dropped the tails. Besides, the fellas had more guns than they could ever shoot, all right down there under the slab, carefully serviced, cleaned and protected.

President Kerry had made a major enemy with his tax increases. One man, a self-made billionaire, had earned every penny he had. Using several layers of cutouts, he put a price on the Presidents head.

### The Armchair Survivalists – Chapter 3 – Time for Action

The three men probably shouldn't have gotten themselves involved in buying the illegal firearms, but it had started so innocently with Ron helping out a neighbor. They had talked about it a lot. They were old and tired and had serious health problems. They agreed that they were all living on borrowed time. Ron had actually died in 1992 when he'd had his heart attack, but was successfully shocked back to life and subjected to open-heart surgery as soon as he was stable. Clarence's recent heart attack had also resulted in open-heart surgery and then he'd had the stroke before he'd even come out from under the anesthetic.

Gary had never come close to dying, but the surgery he'd had in August of 2003 to remove a cyst from his pancreas was close enough. He didn't learn until much later that the *Whipple Procedure* was generally reserved for patients who had operable pancreatic cancer.

At the time, he couldn't understand why the surgeons at USC were so excited when they got the pathology results back and reported with a smile that *there was no cancer*. It wasn't until he'd recovered enough at home that he'd gone on the net and looked up the *Whipple Procedure* that he discovered that they thought he'd had pancreatic cancer.

They still took a foot of intestine, ½ of his Pancreas and part of his stomach. And, according to the surgeon, they opened the remainder of his Pancreas and removed some benign growths. It was easy for an outsider to reconcile the attitudes of the three men when their medical histories were revealed. They were indeed, all living on borrowed time.

They finally took time to inventory their accumulation of semi-automatic firearms. It wasn't like they had a bunch of machine guns or anything, just a lot of semi-automatic rifles, shotguns and handguns. All perfectly legal until that butthead Kerry had been elected; well, in most of the US if not in California.

They had picked up some MBR's, including Garand's, M1A's, and a DSA SA-58. There were plenty of Ruger Mini-14's, mostly Ranch rifles, and two AR-15 type weapons, one a genuine Colt and one a Bushmaster. Most of the shotguns were typical bird guns and included a Browning, several Remington 1100's and 11-87's, a few Winchester Super X2's and a couple of imports.

Auto loading handguns made up a large part of the inventory. These ranged all the way from Kimber Custom II's down to some of the Argentinean 1911 knock-offs and were mostly 9mm and .45 Colt auto. They had avoided buying the less common calibers, but they had a few 10mm and .40 S&W autos.

Ammunition for the handgun only calibers was difficult to get because it waived a red flag to the ATF and many dealers refused to carry it for fear of identifying owners of the semi-automatic handguns to the ATF and the state. The gal who owned the gun shop

had a lot of the 10mm and .40 S&W on hand when the law went into effect and she had taken it off the shelves and stored it at home. When it became apparent to her that *the guys Ron knew* were picking up all sorts of semi-autos, she casually mentioned the hoard of ammo in her home.

Ron promptly plunked down a wad of bills and said he'd take it all, no questions asked or answered. The woman thought the new law was a travesty and although she'd switched to bolt-action and lever action rifles, superimposed and pump shotguns, and revolvers, she didn't see the harm in auto-loaders. In fact, business was booming as many Palmdale residents scurried to replace their auto-loading weapons with politically correct weapons.

Lever action rifles seemed to be the most popular and business was booming. The fact that she only took ½ of the 40% markup hadn't hurt either; she sold firearms cheaper than anyone in the Antelope Valley.

"Well fellas," Ron said, "It looks like we're loaded for bear. I wish we had more main battle rifles and fewer of the Ruger Ranch rifles, but we have what we have. It's a good thing we stopped buying guns when we did; I don't think we could stuff another gun in that hidey-hole."

"It's a shame that the Rugers won't use the AR-15 mags," Gary observed, "We only have about 5 high capacity magazines for each of the Ruger's, but there are 60 of the 30 round AR mags and we only have 2 AR's."

"I'd like to see us buy one more AR," Clarence said, "Then we could each have one."

"I have dibs on the SA-58," Ron announced, "I like it better than the M1A and those Garand's only hold 8 shots."

"Jeez," Gary said, "Did you believe that guy? He had 40 mags for one rifle."

"Well, the FAL mags were cheap Gar-Bear," Ron reminded Gary, "They were only \$5 a piece. How much did you spend for 10 mags for your M1A?"

"\$450," Gary replied, "I don't see why everyone has to have different mags for their rifles."

"I'll take a Garand Ron," Clarence said, "These old eyes of mine won't let me shoot fast anyway. Besides, the M1's were plenty good in WW II."

"How about we throw a barbeque on Labor Day?" Ron suggested changing the subject. "I'll do steaks and you can each bring a dish for potluck."

How prophetic, Ronald; Labor Day 2006 was the target date set by the nearly 5,000 terrorists who had spent over a year infiltrating the US to strike. These terrorists had bold



plans. Maybe ANFO was a low order explosive, but it was cheap and available and in large enough quantities... They had some dynamite, stolen from quarries, and some even purchased on the open market. They also had managed to smuggle in small quantities of Semtex in ship containers, America's Homeland Security was a joke.

AFNM, the fertilizer/racing fuel mix had brought down the Federal Building in Oklahoma City. Mixed 94/6, the containers filled with oxygen and initiated by dynamite, a truckload of the stuff would level many a building. It was one of the most popular explosives in the US.

The Terrorist's had rented a vast fleet of Ryder and other rental trucks to haul their explosives, all under the guise of using the Labor Day holiday to move their possessions to new apartments and new homes. From California to Maine; from Seattle to Miami and at hundreds of points in between, they would strike. Their primary targets would be state and federal government buildings and power plants. They'd seen the problems the US had endured with the brownouts and blackouts. The power system was a major vulnerability.

And, for all of its strength, the American federal government depended upon the local governments to implement many of its edicts and programs. The new Assault Weapons ban was a perfect example. The stupid American Congress had outlawed semi-automatic firearms, but it fell mainly to the state and local governments to enforce the law. These Americans were a strange people and they were killing off their own federal authorities to keep those semi-automatic firearms.

And, what was the fuss about semi-automatic firearms anyway? In Europe, silencers/suppressors were not only legal; they were required in some countries. In the Middle East, you only had to go to visit a neighbor to buy a perfectly good AK-47, 40-round magazines and the surplus Soviet 7.62x39mm ammunition. The odds were that the same neighbor might even have an RPG-7 launcher and several of the rocket propelled grenades.

In the US, the silencers, short-barreled shotguns and automatic weapons had been tightly controlled for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a century. And now, the American President had outlawed semi-automatic firearms; what fools these Americans were. Didn't they understand that any firearm could kill whether it was a single-shot, bolt action or lever action weapon? A semi-automatic firearm merely provided a quick second shot to make up for a poorly placed first shot. Even the American police had switched to the magazine fed 9mm handguns in preference to the perfectly good, more powerful, .357 magnum revolvers.

They loaded the 55-gallon drums of AFNO aboard the rental trucks using shop cranes or by rolling the barrels of explosives aboard the trucks. It was hard backbreaking work, but America would have their fireworks two months late on Labor Day rather than on their Independence Day. Two, three and four man teams loaded the explosives.

Then the others set off with their dynamite or Semtex to attack power substations, leaving a single man to drive the truck to the state and federal government offices and power plants. They used modified kitchen timers and electrical detonators to trigger the ANNM filled trucks. An hour gave them plenty of time to clear the area and a rental truck parked for any longer in the area of a governmental building or power plant would attract undue attention. They would have two chances to strike at America, first with the truck bombs and later as suicide bombers.

They would bring America to its knees first and then kill thousands as they waded into crowds and detonated their explosive wrapped bodies. Our armchair survivalists out in Palmdale didn't have a clue that America was about to be attacked as they prepared for their Labor Day barbeque.

They'd taken the barrels of the semi-automatic shotguns to the obliging gun dealer who had shortened the barrels to 18½" for the men a few at a time. In for a penny, in for a pound, she'd even shortened three of the 11-87 barrels to 14" failing to report the activities to the ATF. What they didn't know wouldn't hurt her, she calculated. And besides, what were those three old men going to do with the cylinder bored 14" barrels for the 11-87 shotguns anyway?

She didn't know that they'd purchased pistol grips for the 11-87 shotguns on the net creating their own versions of the LEO only tactical shotguns (Cruisers). And the men had no idea when they'd found and installed a second used 550-gallon propane tank in Gary's front yard and filled it that those 1,000 gallons of propane would prove to be so important in the days to come. All enclosed in the extended wooden fence, of course.

The 5-gallon gas cans had become available, too, but the men bought the cans and hadn't filled them because they hadn't seen the need. It was getting harder to accumulate the .223, .308 and especially the 30-06 Garand ammunition that they needed for their rifles; they ended up buying some used Garand clips from another fella and loading the clips with hunting ammunition. Ron and Linda, Gary and Sharon, Clarence and Lucy plus John and Kevin were at Ron and Linda's house at 3:00 pm PDT on Labor Day visiting when the power failed.

"Son of a gun," Ron cursed, "Hang on a minute while I fire up the generator."

Ron started his generator and the older folks gathered in the family room to watch TV and find out what was going on. At first, Adelphia wasn't broadcasting anything, but as they're backup power came online, they began to broadcast, well nothing.

Channel 4 in LA was the first station to come back online, followed by the other networks and finally CNN and FOX News. Did I forget to tell you that Gary didn't like Paul Moyer and Colleen Williams? He couldn't stand Moyer, probably because Moyer was so anti-gun that he made Gary sick to his stomach. Moyer didn't know the difference between a rifle and a shotgun, an automatic and a semi-automatic and all handguns were cop-killing pistols. Williams wasn't one bit better.

Anyway, they switched to CBS, the Communist Broadcast System, and watched channel 2. The outage was widespread in Los Angeles and reports were surfacing of massive truck bombs, ala Oklahoma City, which had taken out state and federal office buildings in Los Angeles.

They switched to FOX News at Ronald's instance and soon learned that the bombing had occurred not just in Los Angeles, but also throughout the US. They sat transfixed as the news slowly filtered in, completely forgetting about the barbeque. Clarence and Lucy left after an hour to fire up his generator.

Gary knew that his system came on automatically, so he just sat and listened. The more they listened, the worse the attack what else could you call it, seemed to be. State office buildings in all 48 states had been destroyed. All of the stations were operating on backup power of some kind and apparently the electrical grid was down all over the US. It was almost 1am Tuesday morning before Gary and Sharon got up to go home.

Driving towards the intersection of 47th Street East and Avenue R-4, Gary saw that there was a traffic accident. There was no one around and he got out to check on the passengers of the CHP car and the Celica. Both passengers in the Celica were dead; they hadn't been wearing seatbelts and were thrown from the car. The CHP officer was strapped in his seat, but in a fluke, a piece of windshield had struck him across the throat and he'd bled out.

It was a tragedy, to be sure, but ever the opportunist, Gary removed the officer's gun belt, the shotgun and the M-16 semi-automatic rifle from the trunk of the CHP car. The officer's handgun was the .40 S&W special model carried by the CHP. The rifle was a M16A2 modified to shoot semi-auto only. The shotgun was the standard CHP riot gun. Gary took everything he could use. The unfortunate officer, responding to an accident had been running with his red lights but no siren. The Celica had pulled out right in front of him and he hadn't been able to avoid the collision, if Gary read the scene correctly. Since everyone was dead, Gary didn't see the sense of calling the accident in. Besides, he'd taken the firearms.

To backtrack a little bit, just before the three men had installed the second propane tank, Gary had installed a 6' high cyclone fence around his front yard to keep neighbor kids away from his propane tank and generator. Gary and Sharon got home, the generator was running just fine, and Gary sat up the rest of the night watching the drama unfold on CNN.

It was 3 am before he remembered to take his insulin and he made a point not to take either the Benadryl or the Xanax, he wanted to stay awake. An unrepentant channel switcher, Gary switched between FOX, CNN and KCBS, channel 2 in Los Angeles. The more he listened, the more convinced he became that if the US thought it had troubles before Labor Day, it was in for a rude awakening. At 6 am, Gary woke Sharon.

“Honey, would you give me a hand?” Gary asked.

“Doing what?” Sharon asked. She wasn’t in a good mood; Gary had played the TV all night and she hadn’t gotten much deep sleep.

“We need to haul the stuff out of the slab storage,” Gary said.

“Why?” she countered.

“Sharon, the crap has hit the fan,” he said. “Those were obviously terrorist attacks and there were thousands of them. I don’t know how they managed to pull off such a major operation, but according to CNN, almost 5,000 explosions occurred around the US at 3 pm yesterday afternoon.”

“5,000?” she said, “That can’t be right, 50 would be a lot, 500 would be unbelievable. But 5,000, no way.”

“I’m telling you, CNN said the number appeared to be approaching 5,000,” he insisted “By comparison, the World Trade Center and the Pentagon airplane attacks were nothing.”

“Did a lot of people die?” she asked.

“A few, but very few,” he reported, “Mostly people that were working at the state and federal buildings as security and the power company employees who were in the control rooms.”

“Do they have any idea who was behind it?” she asked.

“They’ve been speculating all night honey,” Gary said, “But I don’t think they have a clue. The speculation has run the gauntlet from Muslim terrorists to American Patriots po’d at the government. My money is on the Muslims.”

“You’d better call Ron and wake him up,” Sharon suggested.

“I already tried dear,” he said, “The phone lines are down, at least for the moment.”

Sharon made them some coffee and put some frozen cinnamon rolls in the oven to bake. She took a shower and dressed and after they’d eaten, took the weapons that Gary handed to her from beneath the planter. Sharon hadn’t realized how many guns the men had accumulated. She was downright shocked when he handed up the Remington 11-87’s with the 14” barrels and the pistol grips.

“Aren’t those shotguns illegal?” she asked.

“Every gun in this hidey-hole is illegal Sharon, that’s what all the fuss is about,” Gary

explained patiently.

“My Dad had a Browning semi-auto shotgun back when he could still hunt,” she said, “You’re not telling me that it’s illegal too are you?”

“That’s what I’ve been trying to explain to you ever since Kerry got that stupid semi-auto ban passed,” Gary said.

“I thought that it only applied to Assault rifles and handguns,” Sharon said, “I guess that I didn’t realize that it affected shotguns too.”

“No dear, the ban applies to all semi-auto weapons, even the lowly .22 rifle,” Gary answered.

“That doesn’t make any sense,” Sharon said.

“Sure it does Sharon,” Gary laughed, “It wouldn’t be sporting if you were allowed 2 shots at a squirrel.”

They had all of the firearms out of the hidey-hole and stacked on the patio under the rain cover. The phone rang; apparently the outage had been temporary. The call was Ronald and he wanted to speak to Gary.

“Damn partner, I just put on the news,” Ron said, “TSHTF big time. Someone even stripped a CHP officer of his guns at a traffic accident up on the corner of R-4 and 47<sup>th</sup> Street East.”

“Ron, you know that third AR we wanted?” Gary asked, “We got it.”

“Was that you butthead?” Ron asked.

“Yeah, we came on the accident just after it happened,” Gary explained. “The two people in the Celica had been thrown from their vehicle and were dead. The CHP officer took a piece of glass across his neck and had bled out. It probably wasn’t right to take his guns, but that poor officer had no more use for them and we needed another AR.”

“I’m fast using up my gasoline Gar-Bear,” Ron said, “This gasoline generator is burning about one gallon per hour. Can you spare me any gas?”

“I could Ron, but I only have 100-gallons,” Gary said, “How long do you think that will last you and Clarence?”

“I see what you mean Gary,” Ron said, “I should have switched to a natural gas/propane vapor generator myself.”

“Clarence is in the same boat as you are, Ron and hindsight is 20/20,” Gary commented. “Why don’t you and Linda start moving all of your stuff over here and the three of us will make a stand here?”

“What do you mean, make a stand, Gary,” Ron asked.

“I stayed up all night watching TV Ron,” Gary explained, “It seems apparent to me that the US has been attacked by terrorists. Thousands of terrorists if you ask me.”

“Where did they all come from?” Ron asked.

“I’m just speculating, Gary said, “But I’d guess that a lot of them are here on student Visas or on forged papers.”

“If you’re right,” Ron said, “Those people who sold us their guns are going to want them back.”

“I’m sure they will,” Gary said, “But first they have to find us and then they have to take them away by force. As far as I’m concerned, they can’t have them back. Anyone willing to give up a thousand dollar rifle for four hundred dollars doesn’t deserve to have the gun in the first place. You call Clarence and tell him and Lucy to start moving their stuff. He’ll listen to you better than me, he thinks I’m nuts.”

“I do too Gar-Bear,” Ron laughed, “Or should I just say crazy as in crazy like a fox?”

“Whatever,” Gary said and hung up.

“Sharon, we’re going to have to move your stuff out of the sewing room,” Gary had announced after he hung up.

“What?” Sharon had replied, “Why are we going to have to do that? I just got the room set up the way I wanted it.”

“The whole world as we knew it ended yesterday,” Gary replied, “I know I should have asked first and I apologize Sharon, but this isn’t like Tony and Karen or like when Amy and Udell moved in. And, when Lorrie calls and Amy calls, tell them to start moving their stuff here, too.”

“WHAT?” Sharon shouted, “There’s no way they’re moving back in here!”

“Sharon, stop and think,” Gary said, “I know where you’re coming from, but turn on the TV. Listen to the news for a few minutes. If you still think I’m wrong, then we can talk about it. We don’t have to move the stuff yet, anyway.”

Sharon wasn’t convinced, but 10 minutes of CNN made it very clear that they were going to have houseguests. She started clearing the tables in her sewing room. When Ron

got there, he helped Gary move the tables to the garage and the men carefully set her sewing room up in the garage exactly as they found it.

That left half the garage empty and Ron and Gary stacked Ron and Linda's food in the space. They also squeezed in Clarence and Lucy's food. They were short on beds and Ron and Clarence moved the boy's beds and Ron and Linda's bed to Gary and Sharon's. Eventually Amy called and Lorrie called. Sharon told them to start moving their beds and food to the house. It was an all day process relocating the families but the three old men agreed that there was security in numbers.

All of a sudden, the 3-bedroom house had gone from two occupants to 20 occupants. They set the kids beds' up on the patio and covered the large 15'x64' section with two layers of plastic to stop the rain. They strung ropes from eyehooks screwed into the trim on the house to the posts, creating bedrooms of a sort. They divided the rooms with blankets giving each group a little privacy. So far the gas was still on and the water was running. They wondered how long that would last.

That evening, they cooked hamburgers and hot dogs on the grill and talked about what they were going to do. Ron and Linda's swimming pool held 20 thousand gallons of water so if push came to shove, they could transport water to Gary and Sharon's house to flush the stools. There was a water tank dealer down on Sierra Highway, so they could buy, or steal if necessary, a tank for drinking water. At full load, the generator burned 2.2 gallons of propane per hour and 5.4 cubic meters of natural gas per hour. So long as the natural gas was on, they were in great shape. If they lost the gas, they had about 455 hours of run time for the generator minus anything they used to cook with.

Obviously the first priority was getting everyone up to speed with the firearms. Then, they needed to get a drinking water tank, just in case. The next morning, they used some .22 rifles to make sure everyone could hit a target at 50' and explained the operation of the guns to everyone. Then, they set off in search of the water tank.

When they arrived at the business on Sierra Highway, the owner greeted them with a ball bat. There was instant recognition between Mr. 300 and the guy he'd bought the Ruger Mini-14 from for \$300. Well now, this was a fine howdy do. This took some careful negotiation. They could have a 3,000-gallon tank for \$5,000. Or, they could have a 3,000-gallon tank for a Mini-14 and \$500. Apparently this guy really wanted a Mini-14.

Deliver the tank they told him and they would give him 2 Mini-14's and his magazines back for the 3,000-gallon water tank, no cash involved. It was an instant deal. They guy would even bring a crane and lift the tank over the house if they wanted it in the back yard or set it in the front yard, it was up to them.

Since Gary had a front patio, they opted to set the tank on a platform on the patio. There were still a lot of the 4'x4' posts, so they hurried back to Gary's to rip down the picket fence around the patio. The copper pipes from when Gary had had soft water were still sticking out of the slab and for a case of .223 ammo, the guy ran two copper

pipes to the tank, placing it in line with the water system. It cost them some water pressure, but they had drinking water that was constantly refreshed.

Next on the agenda was picking up extra food. There had been a run on all of the grocery stores and after checking Albertsons and Stater Brothers they decided that any chance they had to get food would be from Costco. They typically spent \$200 at Costco before they even got to the food, but on this day, LA County Sheriff's Deputies armed with shotguns were enforcing the members only admission and the \$200 dollar per customer limit.

Flour was cheap, as was sugar, beans, rice, coffee and yeast. The men spent their \$600 combined limit carefully trying to get the most food for their dollar. They didn't do too badly; the pickup was full of food. A deputy started to caution them about the risk of hauling that much food so openly, but when he saw the 3 Remington 870's, he shut up and didn't even say a word about them having apparently loaded guns in the pickup. Dylan was right, *the times, they were a changing*.

A flushed, exhausted President finally lowered himself to speak to the common man and he announced that all federal and state authorities would be concentrating on finding and arresting whoever it was that had bombed America. All of them caught that broadcast.

"What did he mean, 'whoever it was'?" Clarence spouted off after the President had finished speaking, "You'd have to be a stupid idiot not to realize that this was probably the work of Muslim Extremists!"

"Man, can you turn a phrase," Ron laughed.

"Huh?" Clarence responded.

"You managed to identify whoever did it and describe the President perfectly, all in one sentence," Ron explained. "It had to be Muslim Extremists and I'd say that stupid idiot describes the President perfectly."

Only two people knew directly of the plot to assassinate President Kerry, the assassin and the cutout who actually placed the contract. However, the word filtered back up through the series of cutouts to the billionaire that the contract had been let.

The man with the money knew none of the details. All he knew was he had to pay \$5 million in cash up front and \$5 million in cash when the deed was done. For all he knew, the assassin could be his next-door neighbor. (It wasn't.) He had already paid the first half; the terrorist attack had put a crimp in things, but they wouldn't guard the President so closely forever. And, \$10 million was chump change to him because if Kerry was out and the law repealed, he'd save \$50 million the first year in taxes.



The man had already spent the other \$40 million, investing in the campaigns of several legislators who were up for reelection in November of 2006. He was just a bullet and a little time away from getting his taxes back to a reasonable level.

Sharon wasn't too happy to see all of the pinto beans. But, the men had bought canned diced tomatoes and \$200 worth of hamburger. She guessed they would be eating a lot of chili. There wasn't enough room in either of their freezers for hamburger and the men had to make a trip to Lorrie's to drag back Gary's old 21 cubic foot upright freezer. It had to sit on the patio by the back door, because the garage was simply overflowing.

CNN and FOX News began to show photos from around the US. Where the terrorists couldn't get to the power plant, e.g., it was a nuclear generating plant with heavy security; they had taken down the electrical lines emanating from the plant. Where they could get close, they parked a truck near the plant and destroyed the control room or a portion of the generating equipment. There wasn't one state capitol building standing in the lower 48 states. Neither were a lot of the remote state offices in cities like Los Angeles and Pittsburg and New York City. By paralyzing the state governments, the terrorists had effectively paralyzed America. Phase one was complete, now for phase two.

## The Armchair Survivalists – Chapter 4 – Phase Two

The FBI was already looking for some of the students because they had used fake Visas instead of real Visas obtained by fake papers. The fake Visas had worked to get the students into the country, but routine checks by State Department employees had disclosed the document numbers belonged to someone else or were altogether false.

Early on the Muslims had used fake Visas, but soon changed tactics. Although the fake Visas dated back to the beginning of the infiltration period, it was months before the fake Visas surfaced. The FBI had been unable, so far, to locate the students. They weren't at the schools indicated on the papers and US contact names proved to be false or the people simply had never heard of the student. With the big push on seizing American semi-automatic weapons and resultant criminal activities, the search for the students had been pushed to a back burner.

An agent from Kansas City put two and two together and forwarded a high priority memorandum to Washington. Having learned its lesson from the 9/11 tragedies, the FBI followed up on the memorandum and soon realized that they had over 250 of the fake Visas floating around the country. Somehow, someone had missed the fact that there were so many fake Visas.

The actual number of bombs that exploded was under 5,000 and the FBI caught a second break when a security guard discovered a Ryder rental truck sitting near a state office building in Cincinnati. The truck contained 20 55-gallon drums of AFNM rigged with dynamite and a kitchen timer that the contacts had failed to make contact. The rental truck was traced back to a student from Afghanistan who had a real Visa but was nowhere to be found. The information made its way to the hastily set up Labor Day Bombings Task Force and they pieced the whole plot together.

The Task Force pulled State Department records and discovered that between the fake Visas and the fake identities that didn't pass more than a cursory examination, that nearly  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the 15,000 Muslim students who had entered the US over the past 16 months had done so either with false Visas or with legitimate Visas obtained with false papers.

Further investigation showed that the President, anxious to reconcile problems between Muslims and America had apparently ordered the Secretary of State to fast track the Visa applications of Muslim students. It had taken the FBI over a month to sort the problem out. So far, none of the nearly 5,000 students had been located; it was as if they'd disappeared from the face of the earth.

Not only were the US borders porous, its agencies seemed to leak information. It wasn't long before reports began to appear on the network and cable news that the Labor Day bombings were thought to be the work of Muslim extremists who had infiltrated the US over a 16-month period.

You couldn't turn on a TV or radio, assuming you had electricity or batteries, without finding someone discussing the issue and asking how could this happen. Bill O'Reilly for FOX News was getting a lot of mileage out of the issue, just repeating that same tired question, *how could this happen*. Rush and the other rightwing oriented commentators were calling for the impeachment of the President for High Crimes and Misdemeanors for fast-tracking the Visas.

"You know," Gary commented, "This business about *how could it happen* and Limbaugh calling for the President's impeachment is a bunch of bull. What about the flippin' terrorists? They haven't arrested anyone and it's been over a month!"

"There's thousands of Muslims just in Los Angeles alone Gary," Clarence said, "How are they going to find a few terrorists buried in that group?"

"That's easy," Ron said "We just arrest all of the Muslims and sort it out later."

"My, my," Clarence replied, "Why does that not surprise me? Those people have rights Ron, you can't just trample on them."

"I know Clarence," Ron admitted, "It would be the Japanese interment thing all over again. Besides, even if they did arrest all of the Muslims in the country, there wouldn't be enough places to keep them. I saw a Bruce Willis movie on TV, what was the name of that, oh yeah, *The Siege* where there was some sort of terrorist plot and they brought in the Army to cordon off New York. They started arresting every one of the Arabs and pretty soon..."

"I saw it too Ron," Gary interrupted. "You remember that the character Willis played warned that it wasn't a good idea don't you? The same thing applies here. I agree with Clarence, we can't go around arresting Muslims just because they're Muslims."

"Do you think they'll ever get the lights back on?" Ron changed the subject quickly. "I mean I appreciate all you've done Gar-Bear, don't get me wrong, but 20 people in one house? Besides, it's getting pretty cold out at night and all those kids sleeping on the patio has to change. They're freezing their butts off."

"It's just a matter of days Ron," Gary responded, "Channel 2 says power is back on in parts of Los Angeles and all of southern California will have power before Thanksgiving. That's just three weeks from Thursday."

Now, if you were planning on exploding suicide bombs in large crowds, what day would you pick? How about the largest retail day of the year? Historically anyway, the day after Thanksgiving was the day that people began their Christmas shopping. This year people might not have much money to spend because of the power outages, but they could still look. The power came back on in the Antelope Valley on November 12th.

Gary immediately had someone check out his generator and had it serviced, it had performed flawlessly for two months, having only been shut down for maintenance. The families all returned to their homes and prepared to have their Thanksgiving celebrations. Running low on beef and pork, some stores had pulled out the leftover turkeys in late September. You know all of those free and cheap turkeys the grocery stores have on promotion during the weeks preceding Thanksgiving? They are usually left over from the prior year. This year, they lugged them out in September to have some meat to sell. The three old guys had loaded up on them because the freezer was getting empty anyway and how much chili could you eat?

With the restoration of power, the grocery stores started to have food again and Ron, Gary and Clarence filled in their survival supplies and bought some real food. Roasts and hams and steaks were very popular. Gary even loaded up on Oscar Mayer Bologna from Costco; he sure missed his bologna sandwiches.

Ron and Clarence located some 12kw natural gas/propane vapor generators and quickly had them and the automatic transfer switches installed. It was a busy two weeks before Thanksgiving, the houses were stale from being shut up for so long, there was the furniture to move back, and suffice it to say that everyone was busy.

Between the food purchases, the generators and everything else, they had to do, they used up their available funds and were totally exhausted. They had sold off a few of the semi-automatic firearms too and used that money to put in 3,000-gallon water tanks and have them plumbed, together with 550-gallon propane tanks.

November 24, 2006 soon got added to the dates America would long remember. The day after Thanksgiving wasn't a huge retail day, but a lot of people were out shopping, hoping to get ideas for something, anything, they could use for Christmas presents. Money was tight.

To his credit, President Kerry had the military out distributing surplus food ever since the Labor Day bombings. With millions temporarily out of work due to the electrical outages, it was just as well. That was one High Crime and Misdemeanor he couldn't be charged with.

The shopping malls around America were filled with women and children looking for ideas and bargains at 1 pm PST when the terrorists exploded their bombs. Thousands of women and children were killed and tens of thousands were injured. For all of its efforts, the FBI and other federal law enforcement agencies had managed to locate and arrest less than 500 of the would be suicide bombers.

Most of America now had electricity and CNN, FOX and the network news channels quickly reported that Arab terrorists were responsible for the bombings. The FBI took off the kid gloves and threw away the law books. Within a week, they had ascertained that all of the 5,000 odd terrorists who hadn't been arrested were dead, having blown themselves and a group of innocent American women and children to Paradise.

Americans became enraged and soon, if you were Muslim, of Arab extraction or even looked like you might be of Arab extraction, your life wasn't worth a plug nickel. Latinos, Armenians, Arabs, Israeli immigrants, and most of the ownership of 7-11 were running for their lives and hiding out. America had a new enemy now, anyone who was different.

And by anyone who was different, I literally mean anyone who was different. A mob mentality soon began to take over the United States. People whose only crime had been to slip across the border from Mexico were attacked. Homosexuals became a favorite target.

People soon learned that if you had an opinion that wasn't 100% mainstream, you kept your mouth shut or ended up eating a bullet. Anarchy became the order of the day and millions died as middle class America began to eliminate those who were different. You say it can't happen? Try messing with the women and children of the country.

All of a sudden hundreds of thousands of testosterone charged males seeking revenge were on the loose, many of them armed with legal and illegal firearms, baseball bats, you name it. Were you in anyway different from mainstream America? You'd better hide!

[From the LA Times, April 24, 2004: Los Angeles police increased patrols around malls in the West Los Angeles area after federal homeland security officials received an unspecified threat from an anonymous caller, authorities said Wednesday.

The threat, which was passed on to Los Angeles police and other local authorities, warned of a potential attack today against a mall in the vicinity of the Federal Building on Wilshire Boulevard. It was being investigated by the local Joint Terrorism Task Force. I found the article after I wrote the first part of this chapter. Interesting. – TOM]

To quell the rampant mob, President Kerry was left with no choice except to implement martial law, impose a dusk to dawn curfew on the entire country and back it up with the US military and the federalized National Guard units from all 48 states.

What a mess. Tens of millions of Americans were afraid to leave their homes because they were, in some way, different from the mainstream. The terrorists hadn't counted on this type of backlash, they were just intent on killing Americans, but their plan was working better than they had ever imagined.

Palmdale wasn't any different from thousands of other American cities in some respects; immigrants from Iran operated all the 7-11's in the area. The minute the news hit the TV all of the 7-11 stores were closed and their owners nowhere to be found. So were every other minority owned/operated business. People weren't taking any chances.

Although Palmdale had, at one time, been the fastest growing city in California, the growth had leveled off and to the credit of the people of the community everyone got to know many of their neighbors. The mob rule that gripped America was felt a little less in this particular community despite a large conservative population. Essentially a bedroom community with 85% of the working force working down below in the greater Los Angeles area,

Palmdale had the typical California population mix. Unlike Los Angeles, where whites were in the minority, in Palmdale, whites including Hispanics were a clear majority. Oh, the racial mixture had slipped from totally white closer to the average state mixture of people, but part of the draw of the community early on had been racial. People didn't like to talk about things like that, but it was true no matter how you sliced it.

Ron and Clarence were over at Gary and Sharon's.

"Don't those people have any regard for human life?" Ron asked.

"Who are you talking about Ron, the terrorists or the Americans who are killing off anyone different?" Clarence asked.

"The terrorists. Oh, both I suppose. People all over are killing other people just because they're different," Ron replied.

"These are strange times fellas," Gary commented.

"Yes and it is getting stranger by the minute," Clarence suggested.

"What do you mean Clarence?" Gary asked.

"I was watching channel 66 last night, you know, BET," Clarence said "And Louis Farrakhan from the Nation of Islam was on. He's calling for the black peoples to rise up against the white peoples."

"Hell, he's been doing that for years," Ron scoffed, "What's new about that?"

"He was directing his remarks to all non-whites Ron," Clarence said, "Muslims, Hispanics, anyone who is non-white or non-Christian."

"I still say what's new about that?" Ron insisted, "The south central gangs and the east LA gangs are going at each other big time."

"Were going at each other big time Ron," Clarence said, "Now that's what I'm talking about. You and Gary are white guys and sometimes you have selective hearing. The operative word is 'were' as in W-E-R-E. They've stopped fighting each other and are taking on the heavily white dominated neighborhoods in the Valley and to the west, like Thousand Oaks."

"I didn't know that," Gary said mouth wide open.

"Have you ever sat down and talked to Udell about this stuff?" Clarence asked.

"I tried to Clarence," Gary asked, "But he's pretty tight lipped about all things black."

"And you don't like him much either, do you?" Clarence pressed.

"No, but it has more to do with his work ethic and his boozing than anything else," Gary said.

"Well, he was raised in south central and only has a ninth-grade education Gary," Clarence said. "I know he was involved in gang activity at one time, did you know that?"

"Of course Clarence," Gary said, "We've talked about it several times. His street name was Scrap."

"Do you know any of his friends?" Clarence asked.

"Not many, although the phone calls of people wanting to talk to Scrap have stopped completely," Gary said. "That happened back in 2003."

"You say he has a drinking problem. Who do you think he's out drinking with?" Clarence asked.

"I don't know," Gary answered.

"He's still seeing his gang buddies Gary. I'll bet that is who he is out drinking with too," Clarence offered.

"Could be Clarence, but why should that concern me? It's none of my business," Gary said.

"Because Farrakhan is trying to take advantage of the situation in this country and use it to start a race war, that's why," Clarence announced.

"Darn, I always thought he was insignificant," Ron said.

"He was until all hell broke loose," Clarence said, "This is his golden opportunity."

After that heavy-duty conversation, Gary wanted a drink for the first time since January 2, 1999. He settled for lemonade. What if Clarence was right? Could the Labor Day bombings and the Black Friday Bombings, as they were now called, start a race war in the US?

Maybe, if Kerry couldn't get the unrest settled in the country. Rush had added a new charge too, saying that Kerry had completely lost control of the country. It was just too frightening to think about. Maybe he should get Sharon to talk to Amy.

The next afternoon the phone rang and Ron wanted to speak to Gary.

"Hey Gar-Bear," Ron said, "Do you remember back when we put in your water tank?"

"What water tank?" Gary asked.

"The 3,000-gallon water tank we got from the guy on Sierra Highway that we tried to set on a platform on your front patio," Ron reminded Gary.

"I don't have a tank on my front patio Ron," Gary insisted, "I'm looking out the window and there's no tank."

"That's right, if you'll remember we built a 3' high platform but when he got there with the tank, the roof was in the way," Ron nudged, "You probably don't remember that we ended up putting in extra support posts and setting it on the patio roof either."

"There's a tank on my patio roof," Gary said, "I can see it from here. Oh that's right, Sharon was as mad as a wet hen because those extra support posts meant that she couldn't use the patio anymore. Yeah, I remember now. What did you want to know?"

"I forget," Ron said. "What did you think of what Clarence said about Louis Farrakhan?"

"When did we talk about Louis Farrakhan?" Gary asked.

"Last night, dummy. I remember why I called," Ron said, "After we put that water tank in, we had a problem with the water spurting out of the faucet and then the water pressure dropping. The reason I called is because Clarence and I have the same problem with our tanks. What did you do to fix yours? I can't remember."

"When did you get a tank?" Gary asked.

"Clarence and I both had tanks put in the other day, don't you remember?" Ron asked, "You were here supervising the whole time and then we both went to Clarence's to supervise them putting in his tank."

"I remember," Gary said.

"You remember what?" Ron asked.

"What I did to fix the water pressure thingy," Gary said.

"What water pressure thingy?" Ron asked.



“You just asked me what I did about the water spurting and then the pressure dropping,” Gary said.

“I did?” Ron asked.

“Yeah, and before I forget, what I did was get on the top of the tank and unscrew that little cap until water came out,” Gary explained.

“And then what?” Ron asked.

“I put the cap back on and screwed it down tight,” Gary said.

“And that fixed the problem?” Ron asked.

“Sure did,” Gary replied.

“Why?” Ron asked.

“Why what?” Gary retorted.

“Why did that fix the problem?” Ron wanted to know.

“Oh, I’m not sure, but I think there was compressed air in the top of the tank Ron,” Gary said, “And when you first opened the tap the water spurted because of the pressure. I’m no engineer so I don’t know for sure. However once I got all of the air out of the tank, it worked just perfect.”

“Ok, I try that and if it works, I’ll call Clarence,” Ron said.

“Tell him to say hi to Louis for me,” Gary said.

“Yeah, right partner,” Ron said obviously exasperated, “Ciao.”

[Author’s Note: Based on a real conversation with Fleataxi, with a lot of license. Our version of who’s on first. – TOM]

For anyone who is interested, letting the air out fixed Ron’s problem and he let Clarence know. Clarence did the same thing and his water problem was solved, too. That night, Ron and Clarence were back at Gary and Sharon’s.

“Hey Gary thanks for the information about fixing the water tank,” Clarence said.

“You’re welcome Clarence,” Gary replied. “It worked then?”

“As soon as Ron told me I remember the guy saying to leave the top cap off to vent the tank,” Clarence replied. “It worked like a charm. Ron said you told him to tell me to say hi to Louis.”

“I sure did,” Gary said, “How is Louis these days?”

“I’m 5 years older than you and I don’t have half the memory problems you do Gary,” Clarence said. “Last night I was telling you that the leader of the Nation of Islam was trying to stir up a race war between the whites and the Muslims and minorities.”

“Yeah, yeah, yeah, I remember now,” Gary said, “So what about it?”

“So did you have Sharon talk to Amy about it?” Clarence asked.

“I don’t know. SHARON,” Gary yelled.

“Right here dear. You didn’t have to shout,” Sharon said, “What do you want?”

“Did I ask you to talk to Amy about Udell last night?” Gary asked.

“Yes, Sharon replied.

“Yes what? Yes I asked you or yes you talked to Amy?” Gary asked.

“Both. Amy didn’t have much to say. Udell has been hanging out with those old gangster friends of his down in south central and up in California City,” Sharon said, “That’s why he’s been drinking so much. Amy has about had enough of it too.”

“Oh,” Gary replied. Sharon went back to her sewing.

“Like I was telling you last night, the east LA Latino’s have joined forces with the South Central blacks and have been raising hell in the west Valley,” Clarence reminded Gary.

“I remember Clarence,” Gary said, “But what does that have to do with Palmdale?”

“Do you remember the first place you lived after you split with Sharon?” Clarence asked.

“Oh yeah Clarence. How could I forget?” Gary said.

“What was the population mix in that neighborhood Gary?” Clarence continued.

“Well, for one thing, there were a lot of illegal aliens,” Gary said. “And I remember Amy laughing the first time she came over because her drug dealer used to live in the next building. Then there was that time Renee had me driving her all around. I thought she was looking for someone she owed money to.”

“And she was looking to score some scag, right?” Ron asked. [scag=heroin]

“Yeah, but I didn’t find out until after she died,” Gary said.

“We’re getting off the point,” Clarence said. “Since you moved out of that neighborhood, it is almost 100% blacks and Latinos, and most of the Latinos are illegal aliens.”

“Really?” Gary said, “That’s only 3½ miles from here.”

“I’ll tell you how bad it’s gotten Gar-Bear,” Ron said. “Do you remember Theo?”

“Sure, he manages an apartment house there on 10th Street East,” Gary said.

“Used to, Gar-Bear,” Ron said seriously, “Used to. You know Theo, 6’4” of *I’m not afraid of anything* Theo, am I right? Anyway, he moved out. He told me that the place got too scary for even him.”

“Really? Theo’s black, too. Dang, I didn’t think he was afraid of anything,” Gary said.

“He was afraid of that neighborhood, Gary,” Clarence said. “Ron’s right. Didn’t you live on 10th Street west after that?”

“Yeah, just across the street from Target,” Gary said.

“Do you remember what the neighborhood was like behind that apartment building you lived in?” Clarence asked.

“Latino. Mostly nice folks too,” Gary suggested.

“Weren’t you a substitute teacher for a while when you lived there?” Ron asked.

“Yes. Even taught at that Junior High School in that area a few times,” Gary offered.

“What were the students like?” Ron said, “Is what you told me about them true?”

“They were mostly Latino teenagers,” Gary said. “I didn’t seem to be able to get along with them, but I sure tried. They seemed to have attitude. I just figured it was because I was white and a little strict.”

“That was in what, 1998?” Ron said.

“You know, I don’t remember, but I think so, yes,” Gary said.

“I’d bet that after you left in 1999 to come back home, you’ve never been in that neighborhood again. Is that right?” Clarence asked.

“Not really, no,” Gary admitted.

“Gary, I hate to be the one to tell you,” Clarence said, “But it has almost turned into a barrio.”

“Am I that out of touch with what’s going on in Palmdale?” Gary asked. “And if I am, so what? We’ve never had any major gang problems in Palmdale. If you ask me, the two of you are sounding awfully racist. Clarence, I am really surprised at you.”

“Let me answer your question Gary,” Clarence said. “First, yes, you’re really that much out of touch. Second, there’s been a lot of gang activity in Palmdale the last 10 years and it’s getting worse, not better. People moved to Palmdale to get away from the gangs in the Valley and brought their gangster kids with them. You have pretty big ones to call me racist. Man, you’d better wake up and smell the roses!”

## The Armchair Survivalists – Chapter 5 – Power to the People

“Clarence, you misunderstood me,” Gary protested, “I didn’t call you a racist. I said the two of you are sounding awfully racist. All I meant was that you seem to be focusing on racial issues. It could very well be a racial issue, but I think that it’s more economics than race. If we had decent paying jobs for everyone who wanted one, a lot of people wouldn’t be standing around with nothing to do but sell drugs and other gang stuff.”

“Apology accepted,” Clarence laughed.

“I wasn’t apologizing, I was explaining,” Gary protested.

Clarence and Ron were just about right on the money. Later that evening Gary watched the news on channel 2 instead of CNN. There were several reports of trouble in the West Valley. Channel 2 was describing it as apparently gang related, but it wasn’t at all clear which gangs were involved.

Even more surprising was the report of 3 drive-by shootings in Lancaster. That was getting awfully close to home. He watched an entertainment show rerun and switched to Aaron Brown’s rebroadcast on CNN. Brown was airing a segment on gang violence in America and another on Farrakhan’s call to arms. Maybe Gary did have his head stuck where the sun didn’t shine.

Americans were beginning to cool off a little and the mob mentality was being replaced with grief and mourning for the lost loved ones. President Kerry announced that he would be meeting with civic leaders in New York City in an effort to restore order in that troubled city. He was to be joined by the two New York Senators, Clinton and Schumer. The meeting was scheduled for Friday, December 22, 2006 in the former President’s office in Harlem. From there, the President was reported to be planning on traveling to Massachusetts.

It was going to be a hard Christmas in the US. Women typically did most of the Christmas shopping and it fell to surviving husbands to shop for their surviving family members. Accustomed to last minute shopping, many of the men put off shopping until December 22nd and 23rd.

A lot of them never got the chance. The contract killer had decided to use stolen US military rockets, AT-4’s, and attack the former President’s office while everyone was gathered inside. He had visited the office on a pretense and quickly scanned the layout of the office into memory. Clinton had a huge conference room for photo ops and the killer guessed that the meeting would take place in that room. It was an outside room on the second floor and the man made some assumptions about where everyone would be in the room when the meeting took place.

He then started looking for a nearby building with a view of the conference room windows. He got lucky. A second floor office in an adjacent building had a sign on the door

that said the business would be closed the week preceding Christmas. Late the night of Friday, December 15th, the man moved the two AT-4 rockets into the office suite. The killer knew that security would be especially tight on this Presidential visit to New York and he figured he could use that to his advantage.

The man was a Vietnam veteran, and had suffered PTSD and from Agent Orange exposure. After being rejected for treatment by the Veteran's Administration, the man had turned to being a mercenary sniper. His wife had left him while he was in Vietnam and he had been spat upon when he returned home.

Between his personal experiences and his medical conditions, the man carried a lot of hatred, especially for Democrats. He fought in some of the African conflicts and then had turned to killing people for hire. No one knew his name or even suspected what he did for a living. He had spent a considerable portion of the \$5 million advance on acquiring the 2 AT-4 missiles, but even with his expenses, he would clear over \$9 million and could retire.

The Secret Service had searched the building the man intended to use but had failed to find the carefully hidden AT-4's. They had placed seals on the doors into the closed office suite. Because the building had a direct view of Clinton's office, the killer expected them to close off the building after the end of business on December 21st.

He entered the building on the morning of the 21st, and hid in a utilities closet on the second floor. After business hours, he slipped into an adjoining office and cut a hole in a closet wall allowing him to enter the office from which he planned to make his attack. The Secret Service, ever vigilant but pressed for time, searched the adjoining office but missed the hole in the closet leading to the adjoining suite where the killer was waiting. They placed snipers on the roof of the building and sealed the building off.

Former President Clinton and his Senator wife arrived at the Harlem office early, 8:30 am. Senator Schumer showed up around 9 am and the civic leaders had all arrived well before the Presidential motorcade pulled up in front of Clinton's office.

During the night, the killer had placed the missiles on desks so that he could fire both in a period of several seconds. It would be dicey. He had wait to the last minute to open the windows and hope that some sharp Secret Service agent didn't notice. The first missile streaking out of the window would give away his position too. Perhaps his hatred of all things Democrat or his anticipation of the perfect score caused the man to run the risk, we'll never know. When the motorcade pulled up in front of Clinton's office, Kerry got out followed by the red-faced, white haired, other Senator from Massachusetts, Ted Kennedy. Talk about a coup!

The man waited until he saw the President and the Senator enter the conference room. He opened the windows and let loose with the first AT-4. Secret Service agents saw the missile streaking from the window, but were helpless to protect the President. The

agents on the roof of Clinton's office building immediately began to pour volumes of fire into the office that the missile had been launched from.

Wounded, but not down, the killer picked up the second missile and fired it into the chaos of the conference room. Before the second missile even hit, agents had broken down the door to the office suite and the killer lay dead on the floor. One missile would probably have been enough, but the second missile killed even more people.

The billionaire was watching TV that morning, following the coverage on CNN. He saw the Presidential motorcade pull up and Kerry and Kennedy enter the office building. He watched as the President stood at the podium addressing the civic leaders. He watched as the room exploded and the TV signal was lost.

CNN quickly cut to the studio and just moments after the first missile struck were announcing an apparent assassination attempt on President Kerry. The man never left his chair, watching as the news slowly filtered in. The dead included the President, the former President, his wife Hillary, and Senator's Kennedy and Schumer. What a prize! The Secret Service had shot the killer just moments after the second missile had been launched, that was even better.

The frosting on the cake came when he learned that several of the civic leaders had been killed, including Louis Farrakhan, the leader of the Nation of Islam. Farrakhan had all but forced his way into the meeting, arguing that he represented a large constituency in Harlem. The billionaire didn't even have to pay the second \$5 million because the killer was dead.

The nation was stunned by the attack in New York. It didn't take the American Patriots long to overcome their shock, maybe 5 minutes, tops. However, the death of so many black community leaders in the missile attack had an unforeseen consequence. America exploded into a race war. Before the bodies of the victims had even been removed from the scene, riots broke out in Harlem, Detroit, New Jersey, Florida, Chicago and Los Angeles.

Before the end of the day, other cities with large minority populations joined in. The rioters didn't care about those white liberals, who had been killed, but the deaths of so many prominent members of the black community struck a nerve. CNN mentioned Senator's Kerry replacement Senator from Massachusetts, a Democrat who had also been in attendance and had been killed, almost as an afterthought.

Udell was up in arms and had been drinking and Amy didn't know what to do. In desperation, she fled to her mother's. Lorrie had her mother pick her and Jeffrey up after Sharon returned from Lancaster with Amy, Audrey and Junior. David would be home shortly and he could bring the boys over to her mom's.

Lorrie always called Gary Daddy, and Daddy had let David and the boy's keep the Mini-14 rifles. He told them they were illegal as hell, so keep them out of sight. They did do

that. Gary was glued to the TV and didn't even know that Sharon had left until she returned with the girls and the kids.

He had not gotten around to putting the weapons back in the slab storage and when Sharon got home, he had his 14" barreled Remington 11-87 and his M1A sitting right next to his chair. He was also wearing the Chief's special and her Mini-14 and the Sauer were lying on the kitchen counter. She guessed he was trying to send her a not too subtle message.

Ron had called and Gary used his fax line to call Clarence. Both lines were on Gary's 2-line phone on his computer desk and they had a three-way conference. Were these phones neat or what?

"I'm going to hunker down here Gar-Bear," Ron told him and Clarence.

"Me too," Clarence advised. "Come daylight Gary, I'll be over to get more of that .30-06 ammo for my Garand."

"How much did you take Clarence?" Ron asked.

"One metal can," Clarence said, "I figured if I couldn't stop them with 192 rounds it wouldn't matter anyway."

"How are you set Ron?" Gary asked.

"I've been sitting here watching TV and loading mags," Ron advised, "Got all 40 of them loaded. Loaded up some of the AR mags for Linda to use in the AR-15 and a few for the boys so they could use the Mini-14's."

"I have all 20 of my M1A mags loaded and 10 mags for Sharon's Mini-14," Gary stated, "Got my short shotgun loaded with 12-pellet, too. Anybody who comes around will probably be close, so it'll probably be shotgun time."

"You watch yourself in that neighborhood of yours Gary," Clarence said, "There's a lot of the brothers living in that tract."

"But, they're my neighbor's Clarence," Gary protested, "They shouldn't bother us."

"Just you mind what I say, dang it," Clarence retorted.

"Ok, ok, I'll be careful," Gary said.

"Where's Udell?" Clarence asked Gary.

"I have no idea. Amy came over here with the kids. She said he'd been drinking and took off," Gary answered.



“No way he’s going to hurt those kids Gary,” Clarence said, “I expect you’ll be alright.”

“What do the two of you think about what went down in New York today?” Gary asked.

“No great loss,” Ron said, “At least we won’t have to worry about the Broad running for President. What do you think Gar-Bear?”

“I think that I couldn’t have contrived a better deal for any of my survival stories Ron,” Gary said, “Fleataxi was always wanting me to kill off the whole bunch in one of my stories.”

“Gary, are you still writing the Survivalist crap?” Clarence asked.

“Sure Clarence, why not, there are hundreds of possibilities for stories,” Gary replied.

“I tell you why not Gary,” Clarence said, “If this goes down the way I think it’s going to you’re going to be too busy to write any more fiction or fantasy or whatever you call it. Man, New York, Detroit, New Jersey, Miami, Chicago and LA went up instantly. FOX News says that there are racial disturbances in all of the major cities. You white boys are in for a rude awakening.”

“You’re a fine one to talk,” Ron laughed, “The only thing about you that is black is your skin, Uncle Tom.”

Clarence started to laugh and it took him more than a minute to calm down. The guys couldn’t see it, but he’d laughed so hard he had tears streaming down his face.

“You...you...you’re right Ron,” Clarence finally said, “But I got the feeling them boys ain’t going to be looking any further.”

“Do you think we’d be better off if we all got together?” Gary asked.

“Maybe in a day or two,” Clarence suggested, “But let’s just sit tight for now. Thing is, I don’t want to be on the streets cause some white dude be shooting at me. You fellas don’t want to be out either cause some of the brothers or them Latinos be shooting at you.”

“Would you rather I bring you the .30-06 ammo?” Gary asked.

“Nope. I’ll be ok in the daylight,” Clarence said. “I have to go, see you tomorrow Gary.”

“Ok Clarence, see you tomorrow,” Gary said.

“Ciao,” Ron said.

"I may pull another all-nighter, watching the news Ron," Gary said.

"What for?" Ron asked, "Get some sleep; you're going to need it in the coming days."

There hadn't been a lot of rebuilding done since the previous riots. For his part, Gary hadn't expected any more riots. He figured that the unrest during the summer of 2005 had vented the nations' spleen. That's why he half disagreed with Clarence over the demographics of Palmdale and Louis Farrakhan. Although there were a lot more drive bys in the west Valley, Gary attributed it to school kid stuff. Gary was wrong, again, and he should have known better.

Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862. It said:

*Whereas on the 22nd day of September, A.D. 1862, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:*

*That on the 1st day of January, A.D. 1863, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.*

*That the executive will on the 1st day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State or the people thereof shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such States shall have participated shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State and the people thereof are not then in rebellion against the United States."*

*Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this 1st day of January, A.D. 1863, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the first day above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States the following, to wit:*

*Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana (except the parishes of St. Bernard, Palquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terrebone, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the city of New Orleans), Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkeley, Ac-*

*comac, Morthampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Anne, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth), and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.*

*And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.*

*And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defense; and I recommend to them that, in all case when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.*

*And I further declare and make known that such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.*

*And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.*

Right, that had really freed the slaves. Congress had seen fit to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1866. Same result. It was so bad that 100 years later, Lyndon Johnson had pushed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 through Congress. Dozens of court cases later, the USA had finally begun to make some headway. Very little headway, but some.

As recently as the March 17, 2004 issue of AARP Magazine, actor Danny Glover had said in an interview:

*What has this progress meant for the majority of black people? Since 1957, black people have experienced double-digit unemployment – in good times and bad times. Look at the population of African Americans in prison. They represent more than half the population of prisoners in the country, 55 percent of those on death row.*

*If African Americans are going to be firemen for the whole house, then why haven't we been more active in fighting for universal health care? Why haven't we been more active on the moral issues? Maybe it's been the level of leadership or the undermining of local leadership.*

Like I said, Gary should have known better. There were just too many uncertainties in the world to be able to count on anything. Kerry had pulled out of the war on terrorism and it had brought the largest two terrorist attacks in US history. A billionaire trying to cut his taxes by murdering the President had now started a race war. The billionaire? He was on a private jet over the Atlantic Ocean, headed for Switzerland, preparing to take up citizenship in that country. He hadn't counted on a race war. Who he was didn't

matter, with his money he'd never be brought to justice. What he had started did matter, however.

Clarence came by early the next morning. Gary poured him a cup of decaf and they visited for a while. Overnight the situation around the US had deteriorated sharply. Clarence told Gary to hold his cards close to his vest, because he was going to. Maybe it wouldn't be a bad idea for them to all get together Clarence suggested.

But it was December 23rd. Christmas Eve was tomorrow and Christmas the day after, Monday. Besides, it was cold out and Gary and Sharon already had Amy and her two kids and Lorrie and David and their five kids. Lucy and he might try and move in with Ron and Linda if things got really bad, he said. Clarence took 3 more cans of the 30-06 ammo.

The only break in the 24/7 continuing coverage of the growing crisis in the US came when several stations interrupted the news coverage to broadcast the Pope's Christmas Eve service from the Vatican. A little over an hour later, the media was right back at it carrying blow-by-blow coverage of the attacks.

Roving bands of blacks, Latino's and Muslims of all descriptions were attacking predominately white neighborhoods. Roving bands of whites were doing the same thing to minority neighborhoods. One commentator on CNN said they weren't going to cover Santa's fight from the North Pole this Christmas Eve. Santa would probably skip the US altogether to avoid getting shot.

The Latino involvement was curious; most of them were Roman Catholics.

Amy had finally gotten a call from the LA County Sheriff concerning Udell. He had been picked up on his third deuce (DWI) and was sitting in jail. "Did she want to come get him?" they asked. "He's safer in jail," she answered. Man that was relief; there was no telling what Udell might have gotten involved with if he hadn't been picked up.

Derek called to wish them a Merry Christmas and asked if they were ok. "So far," Gary told him, "How were things in Iowa?" "No problems in Iowa," Derek had said, "Des Moines, Cedar Rapids and some of the other big cities had had a little trouble, but everything is ok now." They visited a bit longer and then Derek had to put Elizabeth to bed and ended the call. Gary hadn't heard from Damon in a while, but didn't know how to reach him and neither did Derek.

Christmas Day was uneventful. Gary had heard a few shots some distance off, but apparently a lot of his neighbors had gone to visit relatives. Chris and Patti had gone to Granada Hills to spend part of the day with her mother and then planned to go to Santa Monica to visit his folks. Clarence said his sister was coming over for Christmas and Gary hadn't heard from Ron since the conference call. He hoped that they were ok.

Tuesday morning Gary heard Sharon scream about 6:30 am. He grabbed his robe and dragged it down the hall as he rushed to the living room. Everyone was in the living room by the time he got there. The front window was broken by a small .22 caliber hole. The tinkling glass had spooked Sharon. Gary grabbed his short shotgun and peered out of the glass in the front door. He couldn't see anyone, so he opened the door and walked out boldly, releasing the safety on the 11-87.

He didn't know if he liked the gun because of that safety. It was a cross-bolt safety and you could use a tool to rotate it from fire to safe. Too dangd complicated. He didn't see anyone around so he went back inside and shut the door. Amy made a pot of coffee while he dressed and Lorrie tried to calm Sharon down.

Gary grabbed a cup of coffee and then started looking in the kitchen drawers for drinking straws. He found one about the size of the bullet hole and pushed it through the hole in the vertical blind and through the hole in the window. When he looked through the straw, he saw the light post across from his house. Gary sent David across the street to stand by the light post. The shooter must have been shorter than David (5'10") because the straw was pointing towards David's chest. He called David back in the house and stood by the light post while David looked through the straw. When he got back in the house, David told him that the straw was pointed towards Gary's shoulder. Ok, that made the shooter about 5'5" or 5'6" tall.

"Ron, this is Gary," Gary said into the phone. "You'll never believe what happened this morning. Someone shot a .22 through our front living room window."

"What are you talking about Gar-Bear?" Ron asked.

"No crap man, there's a .22 caliber hole in our front window," Gary repeated. "It happened about 6:30. I did that straw thing I saw on TV and the shot came from the light post across the street. The shooter must be about my height."

"Are you sure it wasn't a drive-by?" Ron asked.

"I'm sure," Gary insisted, "The angle is wrong for a drive-by."

"You have what, 4 windows on the front of your house?" Ron asked

"Yes, 4, why?" Gary inquired.

"I think it's time to cover your windows and mine too Gar-Bear," Ron said, "I'll call Clarence and pick him up. We'll be by in a while."

Chris had the week between Christmas and New Years off. Gary grabbed his short shotgun and walked down to Chris and Patti's.

"What's with the shotgun?" Chris asked.

“Someone shot a bullet through my living room window,” Gary explained.

“Really?” Chris exclaimed. “Are you sure it wasn’t a wild shot?”

“I checked Chris,” Gary said, “It came from across the street. Someone was standing by that light post.”

Gary saw Ron and Clarence pulling in and started for home. Clarence called to him and told him to wait.

“Does Chris have a cutting torch?” Clarence asked.

“Yeah, he’s always cutting or welding something,” Gary said, “Why?”

“Partner, we’re going after some metal plate,” Ron said, “Ask Chris if we can hire him to cut it to fit our windows.”

Chris told Gary no problem, get him 2 bottles of acetylene and oxygen and he’d cut all the plate they wanted. Gary told Ron and Clarence and they told him to get in. Gary held up the shotgun. Ron said, bring it, so Gary climbed in and they headed to Lancaster. Ron knew a dealer in Lancaster who had metal plate. They wanted  $\frac{3}{4}$ ” plate, but had to settle for  $\frac{1}{2}$ ” stuff; it was the thickest he had in stock.

They loaded plate into the pickup until it was sitting on the frame and then added 2 more sheets. They drove back to Gary and Sharon’s slowly and grabbed Chris and his torch. Chris was almost out of acetylene, so Gary gave him enough money for one bottle and Chris left to get it. When he got back, he started to cut the plate to fit Gary’s windows. Gary noticed that Chris cut 2 pieces of each size.

When they had the plates cut, they got all of the boys and lifted them into place. Ron and Clarence had knocked some 2”x2” boards off Gary’s backyard patio cover and they used the boards to hold the steel plates in place. Chris got the boys to carry the extra plates he’d cut to his house and they covered his windows too. Unless Ron and Clarence lived in palaces, there was enough plate left to cover all of their windows and then some. Ron and Clarence, Chris and Matt, and David’s 4 sons left for Ron and Linda’s.

They covered the first and second floor front windows with plate and used some of Gary’s 2”x2” boards they brought along to hold them in place. Chris later said it had been a bear getting those plates to Ron’s second floor. They still had plates left after they finished Clarence and Lucy’s home, so they went back to Ron’s and covered the rest of his second floor windows. They all returned to Moon Shadows, it was already dark, and unloaded the remaining plates at Chris’s. Ron gave him money for new bottles of acetylene and oxygen and Clarence and he left.

The only light that came in the front of Gary and Sharon's home and Chris and Patti's home was through their front doors. Each had a small glass panel in his front door. There were no windows on the ends of the houses, so only the back was exposed. Chris and Patti's house set almost to the back fence on their lot so no one would have a direct shot into any of their back windows.

The next day, Chris got the new bottles and they covered all of Gary and Sharon's back windows. The only exposed glass was the slider to the patio from the kitchen and main bedroom. Gary couldn't begin to thank Chris enough. Chris said he'd made out on the deal since he'd gotten his front windows covered for free. Gary walked out on the patio and looked up. It would take half a pickup load of 2"x2" lumber to replace the missing cover. Oh, well.

Chris had mentioned that the steel plate was *the good stuff* whatever that meant. It sure cut slowly, that's all that Gary knew. Well, if someone shot at his house again, maybe he'd find out how good the stuff really was. But, if he had the choice, he'd rather not find out.

Gary turned on CNN. They were covering the funeral of the President that had taken place that day. They also covered the funerals of the Clintons, Schumer and Kennedy. Strangely, they gave little coverage to the funerals of Farrakhan and the civic leaders who had been killed. It was a busy news day that day and the slight, though unintended, would have far reaching consequences. Other than a brief mention of the tens of thousands who had attended the other funerals, they received little coverage on CNN, FOX News or the network news.

## The Armchair Survivalists – Chapter 6 – World Problems

Leaders from around the world attended Kerry's funeral. With both the President and a former President being buried on the same day, those countries had been forced to send their Ambassadors to the Clinton's funeral. America's problems had not gone unnoticed. Many countries had restrictive gun laws and were frankly amazed at the reaction of US citizens to the new Assault Weapons ban.

Still, the law had been widely debated. Why ban some firearms and not all firearms? Even within the 25-member EU, there was divided opinion. America's racial problems had not gone unnoticed either. The US, thought by many to be the last bastion of Democracy, couldn't even keep its own house in order.

The United Nations was debating whether or not it needed to offer assistance to the US government in bringing peace to the US. The mere mention of the possibility had brought a sharp rejection from the late President and all of the then living former US Presidents.

Separate polls by several news organizations had shown that a large majority of Americans would set aside any internal conflict within the US and resist UN intervention uniformly. Shortly before his death, President Kerry had sent a letter to the UN advising them that were they to vote to send troops to the US, the US and at least one US ally would veto the Security Council resolution. If the General Assembly took any effort to override the Security Council veto, he would demand that the UN leave the US entirely.

The FBI had already identified the Vietnam veteran responsible for the assassination. Several news organizations had spent December 24th and December 26th digging and were beginning to tell the man's story.

He was a decorated war hero who had his wife leave him while he was in Vietnam and who had been denied treatment for the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and the Agent Orange related health issue. The Veterans Administration declined comment. Maybe the man had gone too far, but there were many who understood his frustration. No one had a clue that he was a paid killer.

The slight that the news organizations had unintentionally given the coverage of the funerals of the civic leaders had angered many black US citizens. The 27th of December saw an increase in the racially motivated violence around the US.

The new President, John Edwards, hadn't agreed with Kerry on the Assault Weapons ban. Kerry had selected Edwards in an effort to carry the south. The strategy had worked, and the Kerry-Edwards ticket had won. Edwards announced on the 27th of December that he was going to introduce legislation to remove the semi-auto ban provisions from the Assault Weapons Ban. A 300 person, unscientific telephone poll reported on ABC news the following day showed wide support for the proposed legislation.



Gary had been in the habit of walking Missy every afternoon unless it was raining or the wind blowing too hard. He hadn't walked her for several days and she had been begging. What did a dog know about Weapons bans and racial unrest? She hadn't eaten for several days and Gary was worried about his dog. He got all bundled up and got one of David's boys to walk with him with his M1A.

When he'd dug out the leash, Missy had started barking and prancing and even took a few seconds to grab a mouthful of food from the cat's dish of food. The usual routine was to walk around the center section of the tract, really only 4 short blocks. Gary only had his Chief's Special; Missy at 28 pounds was a real handful. As they approached the corner of Northstar and Stardust Place, Missy began to whine and literally drug Gary across the street to the inside square. When they got home, Gary mentioned the incident to Sharon.

"Well, she looked out the window when the shot came through the glass Gary," Sharon said, "Maybe she saw who the shooter was."

"You know those two black teenagers who used to ride their skateboards in front of the house to torment her?" Gary mentioned, "It was at their house where she put up the fuss."

Gary didn't know the kids. They were just two teenagers about 14 and 16 who happened to be black. In the past, Gary had frequently said that his little white dog was a racist because of the way she reacted to the two boys. With all of the racial tensions in the country this day, the subject was never brought up.

It was a full news night on CNN and FOX. They reported the President's announcement and moved on to the battles that had occurred that day between whites and minority groups.

Gary flipped the channel to NBC and heard Paul Moyer make some crack about guns and quickly changed the channel back to CNN. The American and British representatives to the UN had, that day, vetoed a resolution by the UN Security Council to send peacekeepers to the US to restore order. The resolution had been introduced by the frogs and widely supported by the Russians. The vote was 13-2 in favor.

Gary noticed that he wasn't hearing much news out of the Middle East. Had they finally settled their decade's long conflict? Not hardly Gar-Bear, it was just that the news media was opportunistic and with plenty of news closer to home why bother sending correspondents to the Middle East?

Besides, Reuters and the AP had been reporting on the Middle East situation, it just hadn't made the cut in the newsroom. Had it made the cut, Gary and Ron and Clarence would have learned that forces from Syria, Iraq and Egypt had invaded Israel. That would come up on the first slow news day, if there were a slow news day.

Early the next morning Missy set up such a row that everyone had been awakened. They got dressed and went outside to look for damage. There weren't any dings on the steel plates that they could see, but the water tank had 3 holes in it and three streams of water were spurting out. Gary turned off the water valve and began to drain the tank. Later that morning he got Chris to come down and weld the holes shut.

That was a challenge in itself because of the galvanized coating on the exterior of the tank. Gary had no idea what the effect was to the plastic liner. They then proceeded to protect the tank with the remaining steel plates. The patio cover groaned from the extra weight and Gary added extra posts to support the structure.

Gary set up a conference call with Ron and Clarence using his two-line phone in the office.

"Did you see who did it?" Ron asked.

"No, by the time Missy had us all up, and we went outside to check, whoever did it was long gone," Gary told them.

"Do you have any idea who it might be?" Clarence asked.

"Nothing I could take to court," Gary reported, "Although when I walked Missy the other day she went out of her way to avoid the house on Northstar where those two black teenagers live."

"I told you about your neighbors Gary," Clarence commented.

"I'd go confront the parents," Ron said.

"Nope. I'm going to start sitting out on the front patio," Gary responded. "Sooner or later whoever it is will show up."

"And what are you going to do then?" Clarence asked.

"Shoot the SOB," Gary replied curtly. "Then call the cops."

"You be careful you don't get yourself shot Gar-Bear," Ron cautioned.

"I'll be careful Ron. Clarence, can I borrow your shotgun?" Gary asked.

"Sure Gary. What for, you have plenty of shotguns?" Clarence replied.

"Nothing with a long barrel Clarence," Gary related, "I don't want to kill the guy, just pepper his or her hide with birdshot."

"Come on over and get it Gary, but bring me one of those 20" riot guns," Clarence said. "Do you have any birdshot? I have a box of number 7½ shot."

"I'll borrow that too, Clarence, all I have is slugs and buckshot," Gary said. "I'll be right over."

"Ok, see you in a few minutes," Clarence said and hung up.

"Do you want me to keep you company?" Ron asked.

"Sure, why not?" Gary said.

"I'll be over in 30 minutes," Ron said, "Have the coffee on."

Gary hurried over to Clarence's to borrow the 1300 with its 26" barrel and the birdshot. By the time he got back, Ron was sitting at the kitchen table drinking coffee. Ron had brought his FAL and several magazines.

"Jeezus Ron," Gary said, "I don't want to kill anyone. Why did you bring that MBR?"

"Just to cover your butt partner," Ron replied. "Thing is, you have no idea what you're up against. It's better to be safe than sorry."

The two men sat in the living room until after midnight watching the news. Then, because Sharon wanted to go to sleep, they moved to Gary's office. They were surfing the web, reading all of the wire service reports that hadn't made it to the news.

Gary had several thousand bookmarks and he had created a menu system within his links category that gave them 5 of the most popular wires, AP, Bloomberg, Business Wire, Reuters and UPI. He could access every newspaper in the world with a website, even if he couldn't read them. Some of the foreign papers had an English language version, but Gary's favorite paper was the UK's Guardian. It really told it like it was. Around 3:30 am, the men slipped out of the house and set up two folding chairs amid the support posts on the front patio.

Dawn was barely breaking when Ron pointed to a figure slipping down the street from the corner of Stardust Place and Moonraker. It was one of the black teenagers; Gary couldn't tell if it was the older or younger of the two. The kid went to the light post across the street and fired his .22 rifle. Gary let loose with a blast from Clarence's 1300.

The kid dropped his .22 and ran like he was being chased by a pack of wild dogs. They let him go. The two men walked across the street and found the single shot, Glenfield .22 rifle. There was blood on the ground; Gary had hit the kid. They looked back at the house in the early morning light could see a stream of water squirting from a hole in the portion of the tank not protected by the steel plate. Ron went into the house to call the Sheriff and Gary stood guard over the .22 rifle.

A few minutes later, a Deputy rolled into the tract code three. Gary told him what had happened and the Deputy began to follow the blood trail. By this time, three more Deputies had rolled in. They temporarily confiscated the shotgun and followed the blood trail to the home where the two black teenagers lived. They crashed the door of the house and found the father tending to his son. The boy wasn't badly wounded; he'd only been struck by a few of the number 7½ shot. The deputies cuffed the boy and his father and called an ambulance.

Gary had showed a Deputy the hole in his front window and pointed out the welded up holes in his water tank after they climbed to the roof. All of the police cars caused quite a commotion and half the neighborhood was up, bundled up against the cold, watching.

At first the father had been angry that some SOB who shot his son. The Deputies drove him down to Gary's house and pointed out the hole in Gary's front window and told the guy there were several holes in the water tank. They also pointed out that Gary had borrowed the shotgun and had used birdshot.

If he had wanted to kill the boy, they said, Gary would have used his riot gun and buckshot or slugs. The father calmed down and denied that he knew about his son's activities. The first he'd heard of it when his boy had come home all shot up.

Johnny, Darlene's ex-husband was one of the deputies and he asked Darlene what she knew of the family. They were nice enough people according to Darlene, but the boys were a little wild. Johnny told the other Deputies to remove the cuffs and take the father to the hospital to be with his son. Johnny, a Sergeant, also decided that the shooting was justified and returned Clarence's shotgun to Gary. Next time, he told Gary, call the police first and then shoot only if he had no other choice. This shoot first, ask questions later, stuff didn't cut it!

"Whoa! I thought that they were going to arrest me," Gary said.

"It's always been like that in California Gar-Bear," Ron said, "If you come home and surprise a burglar, you can't shoot the SOB, you have to let him escape. It's called the retreat rule."

"Back in Iowa in the late 1970's or early 1980's they changed the law (1979)," Gary related, "Got rid of the equal force provisions and put in a thing where you could use deadly force if you were in fear of your life. You didn't need a throw down anymore, a screwdriver worked perfectly well. Hell, I still have the screwdriver I went out and bought."

"You would," Ron laughed.

Gary cleaned Clarence's shotgun and returned it and the 24 number 7½ shotgun shells to him. "I owe you a shotgun shell," Gary had said. Clarence offered to come over and

try to make peace between Gary and his neighbor. Gary told him he'd appreciate that, he didn't want a feud to grow out of the incident.

The neighbor's name was Robert White. Clarence and he were sitting at Gary's kitchen table the evening of the same day.

"Mr. White, I'm sorry I had to shoot your son," Gary said, "But that was the third time he shot at my house. I didn't aim to kill; I only shot at his legs."

"I realize that Mr. Olsen, but couldn't you have done something else?" White asked.

"Maybe," Gary said, "But your son had already fired one round and I just acted instinctively. If I'd wanted to kill him, I assure you, he'd be dead instead of having a few pellets in one leg."

"That's right Bob," Clarence said, "Gary came and borrowed my shotgun and some birdshot. Gary didn't need to borrow a gun if he had wanted to kill your boy. He is well armed."

"I see the water tank (Chris had repaired the new hole and added another foot of plating), the two propane tanks and the generator," White said, "What are you, one of those Survivalist's?"

"We all are Bob," Clarence said, "Gary, Ron and me. We have generators, propane and water tanks. Plus we have a fair amount of food put up."

"Mr. White," Gary said, "If I had wanted to kill your boy, I would have used this."

Gary handed his M1A to Robert White after removing the 20-round magazine and clearing the action. White looked at the cartridges in the magazine. The rifle was obviously one of those semi-automatic assault rifles.

"That gun's illegal," White said.

"Only until they repeal the semi-automatic provisions of the Assault Weapons Ban," Gary said. "I bought that gun right here in Palmdale at a gun store in 2004. It was California legal at the time I bought it. It will be legal again in a few weeks. Now Mr. White, do you believe me when I say that I wasn't trying to kill your son?"

"I guess so," White said. "I'll pay for that window he shot out."

"Fair enough. And if you'll promise to get a handle on those boys' guns," Gary said, "I recommend probation if I'm asked."

"That was the only gun we had," White said. "I've had it for years."

“Then you don’t have any way to protect your family?” Gary asked.

“No,” White admitted.

“White, I’m going to take a chance. Wait here a minute,” Gary said and got up. Gary returned a few minutes later with a Winchester 12-gauge Super X2 semi-automatic shotgun and ten 5-round boxes of 2¾”, 12-pellet, 00 buckshot.

“That shotgun is also illegal under the new Assault Weapons Ban, White,” Gary explained. “Stupid, if you ask me. Those shells are 00 buckshot. Imagine what one of those rounds would have done to your son. Anyway, take the gun and the shells, a man’s got a right to protect his family.”

Robert White didn’t know what to say. This Olsen guy had shot his son and here he was giving him a shotgun and 50 shells. He’d taught his son better than that, too. But kids these days were taking everything to extremes.

“Olsen, maybe I misjudged you,” Bob said, “I taught my son better than that. What can I do to make it up to you besides replace that window?”

“Can I call you Bob? Call me Gary. Bob, we need to get everyone in this neighborhood involved in the Neighborhood Watch,” Gary suggested. “I see that sign all the time, but I’ll have to admit, I’m not part of it. What do you say; can we both join it?”

“Sure call me Bob, Gary,” Bob said. “I already belong to the Neighborhood Watch, but it looks like I’ve been watching the wrong people.”

“See fellas,” Clarence said, “It may be a small step, but peoples can gets along if they wants to.”

Gary went down to Chris and Patti’s to thank Chris for repairing the water tank and extending the plate a foot higher. He mentioned that he’d just been talking to that kid’s dad and that he seemed like a nice enough sort of fella. Patti said, that yes, she knew him from the Neighborhood Watch. Darlene, she and several other members of the tract belonged. Gary told her he’d just talked to Bob about it and was joining himself.

The TV news that evening wasn’t all good. The invasion of Israel had finally made the cut and CNN was speculating about what it all meant. President Edwards had said that the US wasn’t able or willing to help Israel. The US had its own problems. If the UN really wanted to go somewhere and restore peace, Edwards was reported to have said, why didn’t they help Israel?

The spin-doctors were at work too, hotly debating Edward’s statement that he intended to repeal the provisions of the Assault Weapons Ban dealing with semi-automatic firearms. The liberals would have you believe that all semiautomatic firearms served no purpose, while the moderates and conservatives uniformly believed that the ban went

too far. Regardless of the type of action, they pointed out, most states regulated the number of shells a hunting shotgun could hold and most shotguns came with a plug just for that purpose. A pump shotgun in the hands of an experienced hunter was almost as fast as an automatic anyway.

Miffed at the veto of the US and Britain in the Security Council, the General Assembly was talking about a vote by the whole membership on the question of sending UN Peacekeepers to restore order in the US. The question of the invasion of Israel had been brought up by Israel and the membership essentially ignored the pleas of Israel. Had Israel assassinated one too many dissident leaders?

Gary got up the next day and pulled up CNN on his computer. CNN had a red banner heading announcing breaking news concerning the UN situation. Gary clicked off his Internet connection and turned on the TV to CNN. The UN General Assembly had voted to send peacekeepers to the US! President Edwards had sent American troops to surround the UN and had given the UN Ambassadors until midnight December 31<sup>st</sup>, less than 48 hours, to be off US soil.

In other news, the racial tensions seemed to be dying off, with fighting limited to several of the larger cities in the country. Los Angeles was an exception, a large gang identified as being made up of Bloods, Crips and several Latino gangs from east LA had swept through Canoga Park, killing hundreds. Arnold had redirected CNG forces to the area to aid the hopelessly outnumbered LAPD. The identities of several gang members, killed by the LAPD, had led to the identification of many of the gangs involved. And Gary hadn't even had his first cup of coffee yet.

Gary called Ronald. "Ron, the UN just voted to send peacekeepers to the US," Gary reported.

"Yeah and the race war in LA got all out of control, partner," Ron said, "Which do we worry about first, the gangs or the UN?"

"That's why I called you Ron," Gary said, "I feel like crawling in that hole under the slab and pulling the dirt in behind me. I have no idea what to worry about. Everything I guess."

"I'll call Clarence and if he's free, we'll come over," Ron said, "We need to figure this thing out."

Gary had just finished brewing a fresh pot of coffee when they showed up.

"Gary, I think that it's going to take the UN a while before they can send troops to this country. And, the gangs haven't come this way out of LA," Clarence summarized, "So we might not have to worry about either for a while. If I had to pick one, I'd worry about the racial unrest and the gangs."

"I feel a little helpless to be honest Clarence," Gary said, "I shot White's kid yesterday and he's probably not a bad kid."

"He had a gun and was willing to use it," Ron said, "And he was using it on you. Good kid, bad kid, what's the difference? If they're shooting at you they're bad."

"You're both right," Clarence said. "The kid may not be a bad kid, but what are you going to do, ask them if they're a good kid or a bad kid before you defend yourself? I heard that Johnny telling you to call the cops first. That's a lot of bull. The kid was shooting. What if he started shooting through your front door?"

"I guess I agree that we'd better concentrate on the race war at the moment," Gary said, "But according to CNN, it's dying out in a lot of places around the country."

"Only in the rural areas Gar-Bear. Some of the big cities are still going at it," Ron said.

"Congress is on recess, too," Gary said, "It probably won't be until February at least until they do something about the Assault Weapons Ban."

"I think that if there's going to be trouble, it will come tomorrow night," Clarence said.

"Why tomorrow night Clarence?" Ron asked.

"New Year's Eve Ron," Clarence answered, "You know what a problem people shooting off guns is every New Years Eve. I think some people might take advantage of all of the shooting and do some shooting of their own."

"But there's a curfew," Gary protested.

"Hasn't stopped anybody yet Gary," Clarence said.

"I have everyone armed and out front tomorrow night then," Gary said dejectedly. "I don't see why people can't all just get along."

"Yeah," Clarence laughed, "You and Rodney King."

New Years Eve was subdued. They didn't lower the ball in Times Square this year because Times Square was too close to an area filled with Latino gangs and there was the curfew. They did televise several of the UN delegates leaving the US just before the midnight EST deadline. Around 11pm, Gary handed out the rifles and shotguns and they spread out on the front lawn. It was cold, too.

When no one had been by at 12:30am, Gary told everyone to forget it. They went back in the house and he turned on channel 2. It turned out Clarence had been right. Just before midnight in Woodland Hills all hell had broken loose. Using the cover of people firing off handguns to ring in the New Year, a group of blacks had attacked a church ser-



vice in an all-white neighborhood. A church service; man, that was a new low. Oddly, a Neighborhood Watch group, armed to the teeth, had intercepted the shooters and killed every last one of them. That gave Gary an idea.

The next morning, Gary got up and started his early morning routine of keeping up with the news. He started with [cnn.com](http://cnn.com) then moved to [latimes.com](http://latimes.com). An article in the Times about the attack on the church caused him to remember his idea of the night before. He got dressed and headed to Chris and Patti's. Patti was a natural born salesman, er, saleswoman, er, salesperson. The Politically Correct crap made him crazy, a salesman was a salesman, and Patti could sell ice cubes to Eskimos in the middle of the winter.

"Patti, did you hear about the attack on that church last night?" Gary asked.

"No, what happened?" Patti asked.

"A bunch of blacks attacked a church in an all-white neighborhood," Gary explained. "The Neighborhood Watch took them out. They were armed! Anyway, I was thinking maybe we should arm our Neighborhood Watch group."

"Gar, I wouldn't let half that bunch near a gun," Patti countered, "There's no telling who they might shoot. Probably themselves."

"What about the other half, Patti?" Gary persisted. "I've got enough firearms to arm them and an armed Neighborhood Watch just might save our butts."

"I'll talk to Darlene about it," Patti said, "But, if she goes for it, we'll have to make sure that the people we give guns to aren't a bunch of untrained amateurs."

"Training is the easy part Patti," Gary said, "First we teach them safe gun handling and then how to shoot. Maybe Johnny can give us advice about when it would be appropriate to shoot and when it would not."

"I'll get back to you Gar," Patti said dismissing him.

Gary went home and got on his computer. That war in Israel had him concerned. He tried to research the subject on the net. He ran across a reference to an old LA Times article about Iraq in the process. The article discussed the history of Iraq over the past 80 years. No danged wonder the US hadn't succeeded in Iraq, they'd forgotten history. Santayana's admonition immediately came to mind, *Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*

Gary ended up spending the entire day on the computer, researching. He even found a series of articles that helped explain the current unrest in the US. With the minorities usually faced with double-digit unemployment, it was simply easier for them to turn to selling drugs to earn a living. That, in turn, gave rise to the violence.

And, for all of their good intentions, the politicians made the situation worse. Six generations of some families had lived on welfare. It would have been better if the government had spent the money on creating jobs. But hindsight was 20/20. The US needed to get a handle on the current violence before the UN invaded under the guise of a Police Action.

And the latest invasion of Israel? Gary wasn't Jew-bashing, but it seemed to him that in some respects the Israelis had brought it on themselves. Israel was expansionist. They'd seized territory from Jordan and from Syria and built housing in formerly Palestinian areas. Israel was desperate to find land for a growing population and they'd stepped on more than a few toes in the process. An Israeli had assassinated one voice of moderation, Yitzhak Rabin, in 1995. His greatest sin had been to try and make peace with Arafat and the Jordanians. It was a troubled world we lived in.

They still held the Rose Parade in Pasadena on January 1st 2007. There were more soldiers watching (guarding) the parade than onlookers. At least the racial confrontations seemed to be dying down around the country. Even Los Angeles got through the entire day without the report of any additional violence.

That was good; but maybe it wouldn't make any difference, the UN was looking for any excuse to invade the US. On January 2nd, President Edwards issued his own Executive Order, suspending the semi-automatic provisions of the Assault Weapons Ban and overriding President Kerry's ban on the interstate shipment of ammunition.

## The Armchair Survivalists – Chapter 7 – World War

For its entire military prowess, the US military was subject to the whims of Congress for funding. The late President Kerry had voted for the war in Iraq, but then voted against funding the same war. The appropriations for the military had been cut slightly because we were no longer fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was true Kerry doctrine, played to the hilt.

Appropriations couldn't be cut as much as he wanted because of the unrest, but bombs and replacement rockets for the MLRS systems and artillery shells and powder were only brought back to minimal levels. The Navy had used a lot of the Tomahawk Cruise Missiles, too and they had empty launch tubes on some vessels. There was a shortage of Naval Aircraft, according to the Navy. The program to upgrade the Abrams Main Battle Tanks to M1A2SEP levels had been halted in midstream.

When the new Congress was sworn in, the first thing that President Edwards did was to ask for a supplemental appropriation to bring the military back to full strength. The second thing he did was to introduce the legislation to revise the Assault Weapons Ban to eliminate the prohibition against semi-automatic weapons. With the UN having reformed in Brussels and its having voted to conduct a police action on American soil, both bills passed through Congress in a heartbeat. They even eliminated the ban against high capacity magazines, but retained the other key elements of the original Assault Weapons Ban of 1994.

Given its history of being unable to organize anything more complicated than a square dance, Americans were surprised to learn that the UN had managed to agree on the police action and were assembling their armies. Russia and France were the most prepared. Russia had lost the war in Afghanistan, but then America had lost the war in Vietnam, too. Russia had been rebuilding, slowly, quietly.

US spy satellites showed the buildup, but none of the CIA's analysts realized that rather than rehabilitating its older submarines wasting away in ports, the Russians had built a whole new fleet of submarines somewhere between the Los Angeles class and the Seawolf class in design. The new subs used 650mm torpedoes which carried almost ½ ton of conventional explosives or a nuclear warhead. The subs were equipped with both types of the torpedoes. The Russians had commissioned 19 of the new boats and three more were nearing completion. These three boats would be commissioned before the Police Action was to begin.

After the Kursk disaster, the Russians had completely redesigned the torpedoes, replacing the kerosene-hydrogen peroxide turbine motors with an engine similar to the mono-propellant fueled axial piston engine with pump-jet similar to the engine used in the 533mm UGST torpedo. The new torpedoes were very reliable and had a speed of 50 knots and a range of over 55,000 meters. And, those submarines were something else. Bigger than the Los Angeles class, quieter than the Ohio class due to French built reac-

tors and equipped with German built propellers based on a stolen American design, they had no equal.

The principal US submarine weapon for attacking enemy surface ships or submarines is the Mk 48 torpedo, with the improved ADCAP (Advanced Capability) variant now entering service. This is a heavyweight torpedo, with a long range and a large warhead. Advanced guidance allowed it to be used against both surface ships and submarines, with the ability to engage high-speed, maneuvering targets. Attack submarines also carried anti-ship missiles that could engage enemy surface ships at ranges beyond those of torpedoes.

The Tomahawk Anti-Ship Missile (TASM), has a range of more than 250 nautical miles and was launched while the submarine is completely submerged. The Tomahawk could be carried in place of torpedoes and could be launched from torpedo tubes. Half of the submarines in the LOS ANGELES (SSN 688) class are also fitted with 12 vertical tubes that could launch TLAMs and TASMAs.

Submarines also carried mines to deny sea areas to enemy surface ships or submarines. Two types of mines were used by submarines, the enCAPsulated TORpedo (CAPTOR) and the Submarine-Launched Mobile Mine (SLMM). The CAPTOR could be used against submarines in deep water, while the SLMM was a torpedo-like weapon that, after being launched by the submarine, could travel several miles to a specific point, where it sank to the sea floor and activated its mine sensors. It was particularly useful for blockading a harbor or a narrow sea passage.

The US Navy currently had 10 Nimitz class carriers, all-sitting in their homeports. In addition, the Enterprise, the Kitty Hawk and the Kennedy were still available. All of the carriers, with the exception of the Kitty Hawk and the Kennedy, were nuclear powered. The new Ford class had its keel laid down. The US fielded 51 Los Angeles class submarines, 3 Seawolf class submarines and 4 Virginia class submarines the last one hurried to completion and commissioned. There were 18 of the Ohio class boomers, usually ½ in port and ½ at sea. Even with its shortages, the US Navy was the mightiest Navy in the world. And, Edwards was remedying the shortages with the supplemental appropriations bill. Would the money come in time?

The unrest had finally settled down in the US. Gary, Ron and Clarence were sitting in Gary's office talking about the current world situation on Valentine's Day 2007.

"Did you get Sharon a nice box of candy?" Ron asked.

"No. She doesn't need any candy," Gary said, "But I got her a card."

"Sentimental or humorous?" Clarence asked.

"Sentimental Clarence. She doesn't see the humor in most of those humorous cards and the mushy ones really get to her," Gary replied.

“Did you see the news?” Ron asked.

“Any particular news Ronald?” Gary asked. “You know I spend half my time on the net reading the news and several hours a day in front of the TV watching more news. What news do you mean?”

“The news about Congress recommissioning the Iowa class battleships,” Ron said. “We go from famine to feast in this country. Got the biggest, most powerful Navy in the history of the world and they’re bringing back those 4 old battlewagons. And, the way they tied the appropriations all together, Edwards has no choice. He either has to approve the funds for the battleships or the rest of the Navy goes without munitions.”

“Didn’t see that,” Clarence said.

“I saw it,” Gary reported. “Thing is they also ordered the Army to finish the refit of the Abrams tanks to M1A2SEP standards within 6 months. That was a multi-year program. I can’t see how they can get it done in 6-months. And, it includes the National Guard tanks, too. At least that will make Derek happy.”

“What’s Derek doing these days?” Clarence asked.

“He working some nothing job in Des Moines and doing his Guard thing,” Gary said. “I talked to him last night. He’s going to reenlist for another 4 years. They gave him that Staff Sergeant’s stripe and his own tank and he’s going to stay in the Guard forever.”

“Are you all done with arming and training the Neighborhood Watch?” Clarence inquired.

“Yep. Of course, we don’t need them now that the racial situation stabilized,” Gary replied.

“What’s with the concrete block wall they’re constructing out front?” Ron asked, “Trying to distance yourself from your neighbors?”

“Oh hell no Ron, I get along great with my neighbors,” Gary said, “But this UN thing has me a little spooked. So, I’m putting up a 6’ concrete block wall all around the old home-stead.”

“But Gar-Bear, gun ports?” Ron countered. “It looks to me like you’re putting in gun ports.”

“Yes sir. And, they’re filling the block with concrete, too,” Gary said proudly. “I’ll be ready when the UN attacks, even if neither of you are. Besides, people been eyeing those propane tanks and I wanted to get them behind a block wall in case the city comes around wanting to know where my permit is for the tanks.”

"Never got permits, huh?" Ron asked.

"Screw them. You almost have to get a permit to pee anymore," Gary said. "As soon as the wall is done, I'm putting in two more propane tanks on the other half of the front lawn."

"I know, you just don't want to mow the yard," Clarence said.

"Shhh. Sharon might hear you," Gary whispered.

"Might hear what, dear?" Sharon called from her sewing room.

"Oh nothing Sharon, we were just talking about the block wall," Gary called out.

"Even though Edwards signed the repeal of the semi-automatic weapons part of the Assault Weapons Ban, I'm still illegal with that SA-58," Ron said. "Pistol grip is illegal in California."

"I'm back to legal," Gary said, "Except for that 11-87 shotgun. And the AR-15 I took off that CHP officer."

"We're all still outside the law Gary," Clarence said. "We all have AR-15's and 11-87's with 14" barrels."

"That was a mistake," Gary said.

"What was a mistake partner?" Ron asked.

"Those 11-87's," Gary said, "We should have cut down some 870's. Or better yet, we should have gotten some custom 12" barrels with improved cylinder chokes and cut down the magazines on some 870's"

"Man, that would be a handful," Ron laughed, "12-pellet 00 buck out of a 12" barreled shotgun."

"I have several cases of the 9-pellet tactical buckshot, too," Gary said.

"Since when?" Ron asked.

"Since tomorrow," Gary said, "I ordered 6 cases from Ammoman. It'll be here tomorrow."

"Give me 3 of the longer barreled 870's we didn't cut down to 20" and I'll see what I can do," Ron said. "She owes me a couple of favors."

Eight days later, Ron and Clarence were back. Ron was carrying a box which he opened to reveal 3 Remington 870's modified to a 12" barrel and shortened magazine. The small shotguns even had pistol grips.

"There you go Gar-Bear," Ron said, "And, don't ask. They have an improved cylinder choke, too."

"Ok I won't ask Ronald," Gary said, "Be sure you each take two cases of the tactical 00 buck. The cops would have a real hissy fit if they saw these. How did you get it done so quickly?"

"Those aren't the 870's I took Gar-Bear," Ron laughed, "Those are the genuine article; came out of the Remington custom shop like that. Let's just say a trade was involved and let it go at that."

"Geez, they even have slings," Clarence said.

"A little birdie told me we could swap our AR-15's for genuine used M16A2's," Ron added. Completely reworked and just like new. \$750 each."

"What about magazines?" Gary asked.

"All you want for \$10 a pop," Ron grinned.

"What are they, AR-15's with an auto-sear?" Gary asked.

"A2's Gary, A2's," Ron said, "Government surplus."

"Stolen you mean?" Gary said.

"Since when did you become so picky Gar-Bear?" Ron asked "By the way, I can dispose of the .40 S&W CHP special edition for you. And the CHP riot gun."

"Ok, I get the point. How many of the A2's can you get?" Gary asked.

"Three. We only have 3 AR-15's," Ron said. "Extras will cost us \$1,250 a piece."

You don't suppose..." Gary started and outlined a plan to get more of the A2's.

Without going into details, suffice it to say that within 2 weeks Ron and Gary each had 4 of the A2's and Clarence had 2. And, they hadn't laid out much cash either. All 10 of the A2's were equipped with the Surefire M4FA Suppressors. Those had required a cash outlay of substantial proportions. But, they weren't hampered by being on the NFA register, so they had been worth every penny. Gary's wall was done and the two tanks were in, but they were empty, he ran out of cash before he could get them filled.

Gary had intended on lying in several years' worth of food from Walton Feed, but the gun deal had prevented that. Maybe his priorities were all wrong, but he had guns and ammo, lots of ammo, and if push came to shove, the guns might provide food, one way or another. Besides, he didn't like the look of the UN buildup one bit. Three of the battlewagons were already steaming and they were working 24/7 to get the Iowa ready for sea. The MIC was working 24/7 producing munitions and refitting those Abrams tanks. Israel had won their war with the Arabs for what, the fourth or was it the fifth time?

A Virginia class submarine and a Los Angeles class submarine would accompany each battleship task group. Two Los Angeles class submarines were accompanying the carrier strike groups. Naval aircraft were brought from all of their land stations to fully outfit the carriers. As soon as the munitions were delivered, our Navy would be ready for war.

The 3 Russian subs had been launched, giving the Russian Navy 22 of the new submarines. They were quite the submarine and were capable of diving to 1,200 meters; even 1,500 meters in a pinch. They carried 6 650mm torpedoes in forward firing tubes and clones of the Tomahawk Cruise missile in 6 vertical launchers. They were so quiet that at 15 knots the US' SOSUS Array couldn't even pick them up. The submarines and their torpedoes were clearly superior to their American counterparts. The real test lay in who had the better commanders, the Americans or the Russians.

Ron and Clarence had talked. If push came to shove, they were going to move over to Gary and Sharon's. They still had the plates on their windows, but they only had a single 500-gallon tank of propane each and neither man had a wall to hide behind. Rather than spending money on a wall or extra tanks, each man spent a lot of money at Walton Feed.

Gary could contribute the wall and propane; they could contribute the food. There was one thing that they both spent money on besides the food, ammo. They bought case after case of surplus .308 NATO ammo and excess Lake City Federal ammo before the supply dried up. All of a sudden, there wasn't any excess production out of the Lake City factory. Ammoman had the Wolf .223, but they wanted genuine American ammo. Since they didn't have the AK-47's anymore, they didn't need the 7.62x39mm ammo they'd purchased. But they hung on to it anyway, you never knew...

Gary had forgotten to tell the contractor that he wanted the two top rows of block to be the brick colored, vertical grooved block so instead of his wall being 6' high it was two rows of block higher. At least it matched his back wall. The car gate and the front sidewalk gate were solid metal tubes, not the square tubing that was so frequently found in gates. They had diamond-patterned steel mesh welded to the outside, too. The car gate slid horizontally, covering the front sidewalk gate when it was open. The sidewalk gate opened outward and there wasn't a battering ram made that could knock it down. Gary finally got the two propane tanks filled in April. Except for food, he was ready, come what may (or June or July).



The UN forces set sail in late May of 2007. Everyone in the US had figured they'd changed their minds; after all, the unrest had been quelled. Obviously the unrest had only been a ploy to invade the United States. The US Navy was very confident that they could meet the enemy on the high seas and repulse the attack. They didn't know, you see, about the 22 Russian nuclear attack submarines operating at 1,200 meters depth.

The Los Angeles class submarines could dive to 300 meters and had a crush depth of 450 meters. The Mark-48 ADCAP torpedoes could operate to a depth of only 3,000 feet, far short of the new Russian submarine's 1,200-meter operating depth. The Mark-48 was also the same size as the Russian 533mm torpedo, smaller and less powerful than the 650mm Russian torpedoes on the new subs. Well, it had a far superior guidance system, but that's all it had going for it.

No one should have been surprised that the Russians had developed a submarine that operated at 1,200-meters. As far back as 1982 they had built a submarine with an operating depth of 1,000-meters (it later sank). The later Sierra class submarine had an operating depth of 1,050-meters. The new Titanium alloyed hull was only marginally stronger than previous vessels. But, with an operating depth of 1,200-meters and a crush depth of 1,600-meters, it could operate well out of the range of the American sub's weapons, safely at 1,500-meters. The extra hull openings for 6 instead of 2 torpedoes were a new development as were the 6 vertical launch tubes and the French reactor. The ultimate insult, if you choose to call it that, was the German made propeller.

As I said, the subs were undetectable at 15 knots. If there was a problem with the Russian subs, it was that they had to come to periscope depth to launch their torpedoes. Those periscopes popping up out of the water registered on American ASW revealing the presence of the submarines for the first time.

The Mark-48 ADCAP's have a range of 40,000 yards, whereas the 650mm new generation Russian torpedoes had a range of nearly 55,000 yards. The US Navy was in trouble, 10 of our 13 carriers went to the bottom. We couldn't even get all of our aircraft launched in time and a lot of F/A-18's were on the bottom as well. The battle wagons laid back, they couldn't go up against the Russian and French carriers. But, those carriers weren't long for the world; all three had been sunk in the first American counterattack. Twelve of the 22 new Russian submarines succumbed to ASW attacks; they weren't bulletproof, after all. The remaining 10 lurked at 1,200-meters, safe from American attack.

"Can you believe that?" Ron asked, "10 of our carriers on the bottom. Some kind of new Russian submarine."

"I always knew they had it in them to build a deep diving submarine," Gary said. "How deep did they say this one operated at?"

"1,200-meters Gary," Clarence said.

“How do they know that, sonar?” Gary asked.

“Sure thing partner, sonar,” Ron replied.

“I’ll bet it can dive deeper than 1.200-meters,” Gary said, “The crush depth of our submarines is almost 1½ times their operating depth.”

“How do you know that Gar-Bear?” Ron asked.

“It’s on the net with everything else,” Gary said. “Anyway, I don’t see how we can stop the UN with only 3 carriers and 4 battle wagons.”

“We probably can’t,” Ron said, “But we can sure slow them down.”

“You know, I just turned 64,” Gary said, “I’m too old for this crap.”

“That makes 2 of us partner,” Ron agreed.

“Make that 3, Ron,” Clarence said, “I’m almost 69.”

“I don’t expect Walton Feed will have any survival food for sale either,” Gary said, “Even if I had the money, which I don’t.”

“Food is the least of our worries Gar-Bear,” Ron laughed, “Clarence and I have been stocking up. The problem I see is getting all of our stuff to your house. Those propane tanks of ours are full, so we’ll have to empty them, move them and refill them; same thing with the water tanks. You’ll have to beef up your back patio cover to hold our water tanks. We can use the steel covering from our windows to reinforce your gates and block wall if we can get Chris to help us. We’ll have to get a plumber to hook in the water tanks and someone to connect the gas tanks.”

“Whoa there partner, what’s this we crap?” Gary asked. “It sounds to me like you have all of the plans made already. Couldn’t you at least ask first?”

Ron was tempted to tell Gary that it was obvious that they were coming to his house. Wasn’t that what Gary always wrote in his Survivalist fiction? Better not, he decided, Gary was so darned temperamental. They declared a holiday of sorts and began to remove the steel plates from the windows. They came down a hell of a lot easier than they went up.

They turned off the water and got the water tanks to draining. By the time they had all of the steel down and loaded, the tanks were empty. Linda had called a plumber and he showed up and cut the tanks loose from the house plumbing and restored the original connections. Clarence and Udell had gone to Clarence and Lucy’s house and done the same thing. When the plumber finished up at Ron and Linda’s, she sent him to Clar-

ence's. They hauled the metal plates to Gary and Sharon's and spent the rest of the day reinforcing the patio roof.

When the plumber finished up at Clarence's he went to Gary and Sharon's and began to lay the pipe to connect the three water tanks together. Bright and early the next morning, AmeriGas showed up and emptied the propane tanks and while the water tank guy was there using his crane to move the water tanks to the trailer, they got him to put the propane tanks on the trailer too. He set the two water tanks on the patio roof in back and set the two 550-gallon propane tanks on the back lawn, cradles and all. While he was at it, Gary had him move the 4 propane tanks from his front yard to the back yard.

The crane could easily handle the full tanks and cradles. The plumber showed up around 11am and he got busy finishing the water hookup. When he was done, he plumbed in the 6 propane tanks. They set Ron and Clarence's 12kw generators on the sidewalk behind Gary's. On the following day, they got an electrician to hook the generators up in parallel. If Gary's failed or shut down, Ron's would start up and if Ron's failed or shut down, Clarence's would take over.

Sometimes Ron could be such a pain. He even got the plumber to roto-rooter out Gary's drain lines. He'd noticed that Gary and Sharon's water sometimes drained slowly. They found out what frequencies Chris's racing radios used and bought 3 45-watt mobiles and 1 base station power supply plus 5 CP-200 radios and the radios tuned to include Chris' 2 frequencies. They also bought a base station antenna and two mobile antennas and 3 Radio Shack masts.

Finally, they started to move the furniture and food to Gary and Sharon's. Gary called Derek and found out that he was being called to active duty. His tank was now a M1A2SEP. Mary and the kids were headed for Arkansas to her mother's. Damon was still MIA. Amy and Lorrie moved their families in and they put up plywood partitions to divide the patio into living quarters.

A quick trip to LA produced a Diamond D-130J antenna, a Cushcraft R8 Multiband antenna, a used ICOM receiver, a used ICOM Multiband radio and a 2-meter hand held. They also bought RG-213/U coax and connectors. A ham from Lancaster helped Gary hook everything up and even produced a grounding antenna switch and lightning/surge protectors that they had overlooked.

They were as ready as possible, given the circumstances. They mounted the mobile 45-watt business radios in Ron's pickup and Chris's pickup. They set up the third in Gary's radio room (the desk in his office). They didn't bother with the FRS/GMRS radios; they had short range and were so public.

The American boomers and the Russian boomers were on station, if it came to that, but no one wanted a nuclear exchange, except for the French. The Russians told the French that they had every major city in France targeted, so the French had better give up any ideas they had of a nuclear exchange. A nuclear exchange was, well, so final.

The American carriers did their best to hold off the invasion, as did the battlewagons. But, those new Russian submarines sank all 7 vessels at the cost of all 10 remaining new Russian submarines. 22 Russian submarines to take out 17 US main surface combatants and a few cruisers and destroyers worked out about 1 for one, but the US lost its entire carrier and battleship fleet. Chalk up 1 for the UN.

This is not to say that the US attack submarines had not been busy. But the boomers were boomers and they had their own mission. The 58 attack submarines had given a good accounting for themselves, sinking a lot of the UN's ships. They had re-supplied and sunk some more. But there were so many ships from so many nations.

America's bomber fleet hadn't been idle either, and a lot of European and third-world capitals had been bombed extensively. We used the B-2's, the B-1B's, the B-52's and some C-130's equipped with MOABs. We dropped everything but the kitchen sink, so to speak. We bombed the living crap out of them, but still they came.

The tactical bombers, e.g. fighter-bombers, were having a field day themselves, bombing the UN ships when they came within range and the troops when they disembarked. But these weren't a bunch of conscripts fighting for some dictator they hated. Not all of them, anyway. They got through and began to go head to head with our troops, armor and artillery.

There wasn't any of this embedded journalist stuff either, the military didn't have time to mess with the press and the media and they were therefore free to show their pictures and issue uncensored news reports. The three old geezers listened to the news and realized that unrestrained, the media was giving the UN far too much news about their battlefield successes and failures. Gary was livid, but then, when wasn't Gary livid with the news media?

They hit the US from three sides, the east coast, the Gulf Coast/Mexican border and the West coast. Great Britain had sent its entire military to Canada, at least all that they could spare, and the UN avoided Canada.

The government was holed up in Mt. Weather and Cheyenne Mountain. President Edwards had made one smart move, rearming the American populous. Every war fought on American soil had included a guerilla element; usually in the form of the citizen soldiers fighting from within hastily organized militia groups. This war was no exception and the militias were having their successes, sniping and employing hit and run tactics.

But, some of those UN soldiers were good and they'd been warned about the American militias. So, they employed good fire discipline and didn't waste ammunition on ghosts. So far, despite taking heavy losses, you could chalk up 1 more for the UN. They had a firm foothold on American soil.

Out there in Palmdale, the old men were hunkered down following the news on TV. Their day would come, they were sure of it. So far, the military and the LA militia (the gangs and survivalists in LA) were doing some damage to the UN forces, but, the UN forces were moving inland and it wouldn't be long before they hit Palmdale and points east.

What were these three old men and their families to do? Stand and fight, obviously but that concrete block wall with its ½" steel plate wouldn't even stop an RPG. Maybe the UN wouldn't go from neighborhood to neighborhood. Maybe they'd just blow through Palmdale and leave a few troops to clean up the Antelope Valley after they left. Well, one could hope.

## The Armchair Survivalists – Chapter 8 – World War, part II

Russia hadn't counted on losing all 22 of its new submarines. At a cost of nearly \$4 billion USD each, building the 22 submarines had nearly bankrupted the country. They had planned on giving 5 of the subs to France to repay the \$22 billion they owed France for the nuclear engines. They planned to sell one to Germany at a hugely discounted price to pay for the propellers and using a portion of the German money to finish paying the French.

That would have still left them with 16 submarines less the 4 they anticipated losing to the Americans, a net gain of 12 submarines. Neither had they anticipated that the Americans would launch a massive conventional bombing raid on their country. The B-2 bombers had hit them and their cities were burning before they even knew an attack had been launched. President Putin was in deep kimchi.

The French had scheduled L'Inflexible to be decommissioned in 2006, but it never happened. It carried 16 Aerospatiale M4; three stage solid fuel rockets; inertial guidance to 5300 km (2860 nm); thermonuclear warhead with 6 MIRV each of 150kT.

The French didn't launch all of their SLBM's, reserving ½ for a second strike. The US detected the launch, and the NORAD computers analyzing the flight characteristics of the missiles soon displayed the computers' conclusion that the missiles were French M4's. That meant that 48 warheads would hit the US starting right about, NOW.

The French spared cities in the area where UN troops were operating. That included Washington, DC. However, the 150kT warheads hit Philadelphia, New York, Boston and 3 other cities in that general area.

A second missile divided its warheads among Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee and other cities in the three states. Kansas City, Omaha, Des Moines, St. Louis and other Mid-western cities were hit by a third missile.

Littlerock, Shreveport and Jackson were hit by the fourth. The fifth missile exploded moments after launch. Atlanta, Montgomery, Birmingham, Miami, Jacksonville, and Cape Kennedy ate the warheads from the sixth missile. The seventh missile hit targets in Texas. The eighth missile's warheads spread along a north-south line along I-25, taking out cities from Albuquerque to Cheyenne and they included Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Denver and Grand Junction. Oops, make that 42 warheads.

The US reacted immediately, launching Minuteman III missiles against France. The French had no land-based missiles and they sat helplessly as the 30 missiles made the flight to France. Each Minuteman was tipped with 3 W78 warheads with 335kT yields.

The missiles struck their intended targets. It sort of gave a whole new meaning to the term French Fries. The moment it became clear that the US was striking only France, Putin stood down the Russian nuclear force. Meanwhile, the US broadcast messages

via ELF and in the clear, giving the location of the L'Inflexible to several US Los Angeles class submarines.

The Dallas, SSN 700, was in the general area and detected and sank L'Inflexible as it prepared to launch its second wave of missiles. Russia didn't owe France \$22 billion anymore. What about Russia's threat to nuke France if it went nuclear? Everyone in France who knew of the verbal threat was dead or dying. The Russians suddenly had very poor memories. Besides Putin's private representative who told the French to go ahead and was dead in Paris.

[Someone suggested that I write in attacks on Germany, Russia, etc. into this story. The conventional attacks had included Brussels, taking out the UN, Germany just on general principal and why bomb a rusting Russian fleet? Besides, Star Wars weaponry hadn't worked and that new Russian subs I described only required money to become a reality and some non-Russian technology to make them quiet and dependable. -TOM]

Out in Palmdale, the TV was out because CNN and FOX news studios were toast. The Los Angeles TV stations had gone off the air when the UN invasion began. The local radio stations still broadcasting didn't have a lot of news.

AP, UPI and Reuters weren't able to get out that much news and mostly the Antelope Valley stations were repeating what wire service news they got over and over. The three old men did learn of the French missile attack and the US response. Ron was the least generous of the three, mentioning something about having frog's legs for supper.

When they were done moving and settled in as best as they could, they took stock of their situation. They had 3,000-gallons of propane, 9,000-gallons of water, food to feed the 21 people for more than a year, enough weapons, spare parts and ammo to fight World War III and World War IV, and some propane fueled space heaters, in case this thing ran into the winter, to heat the patio bedrooms.

Gary was being a little reclusive, and frequently muttered something about Pueblo and Holbrook. Hey Gar-Bear, Pueblo took a nuke, remember? And Holbrook? Well, Holbrook was a long ways away.

Probably the real reason Gary was being difficult was because the French missile attack had taken down Mr. Gore's Internet. Gar was glued to the radios trying to get whatever news he could from around the country. At the moment, there was just a lot of static, maybe due to the radiation in the air? Most of the UN forces had moved east from Los Angeles, having managed to get past the military and gangster/Survivalist militia. Two companies of 'Peacekeepers' were sent to the Antelope Valley to maintain order. Dumb move!

The three old Geezers had sent one of David's boys and Matt to an area overlooking the 14 freeway. The minute they caught sight of the UN forces, the boys bugged out and headed for Moon Shadows. They were describing what they saw on the radio as

they drove home. They arrived back at the tract less than 15 minutes later and the 3 men and the Neighborhood watch sat down at Patti's to discuss what their next move was.

It was decided to send out small scouting parties after dark and map the UN positions in Palmdale. From there, they could begin to plan a counter-assault. The AV militia organizations had attacked the UN forces the minute they hit the Antelope Valley. Only the superior firepower of the UN forces allowed them to prevail.

They had radioed for reinforcements, but the UN was spread too thin and they would take time to get there. They gave their three scouts the suppressed A2's and each one got one of Gary's Rambo knife clones. Just after dark, the three young men headed towards downtown Palmdale. They had 2 of the business radios, but they wouldn't reach 5 miles.

So far, the lights, gas and water were still on. The last report they had from the boys had them nearing 20th Street east, and then the radios got out of range. They could still transmit messages to the boys, but they couldn't hear their responses. Gary made a note to remedy that problem immediately. He told Udell to hoof it down to the Chief auto parts store a mile away and pick up the smallest 12-volt automotive battery he could find. Of course, break-in, they sure wouldn't be open for business! Get some battery cables while he was at it too!

While Udell and one of David's boys headed out for some midnight auto salvage, Gary got Chris to remove the radio from his truck. They took a backpack and rigged a mounting for the mobile antenna. They put the radio in the upper of the backpack's two compartments and cut a hole for the battery cables to the bottom compartment. When Udell and David's son got back, they put the small 12-volt battery in the lower compartment and connected the cables. It worked great. They had Udell try on the pack. He could manage the weight, so from now on he had a new job, radioman. That was ok with him; it meant that he got to carry an A2. Chris had the racing headphones so they rigged the headphone to the mobile radio.

It was almost light before the 3 scouts returned to the housing tract. There was a small force, probably a platoon, at Palmdale City Hall, but most of the UN people were over in the Mall area. They had taken over the AV Mall, that's all the scouts could tell them. They decided to maintain a watch and everyone who had stayed up that night tried to get a little sleep.

That afternoon, a UN utility vehicle of some kind made a pass through the tract. Everyone was hiding out in his or her home and they didn't attack the UN troops. The UN people stopped in front of Gary's fortress and tried the gates. The place was locked up solid and there was no sign of life, so they talked it over in whatever language it was that they spoke and then moved on. Good thing for them that they did, they'd live to fight another day.



“Crap,” Gary said, “They know where this compound is now. They’ll be back, probably in strength.”

“Then Gar-Bear, let’s take the fight to them,” Ron suggested.

“What did you have in mind Ron?” Gary asked.

“We have 10 of the suppressed A2’s,” Ron pointed out. “The boys said there were only a few of them at the Civic Center, I say we take them out and get their weapons. We could stand the extra firepower of those RPG’s.”

“Won’t that be like announcing that we’re here?” Clarence asked.

“Clarence, we don’t know if those people who came by today were from the Civic Center or from that bunch at the Mall,” Ron countered. “For all we know, they were from the Mall.”

That night, David’s 4 boys, Udell and David, Matt and Chris and Robert White’s two teenagers set out in Ron’s pickup around midnight. They didn’t need the backpack radio Gary and Chris had rigged up, but they did rig a set of headphones to the radio in Ron’s pickup. Ron drove to free the other 10 men to fight. He carried his handgun and that 12” barreled shotgun. If he got into trouble, the shotgun had more than enough range.

Chris and Matt rode in front with Ron and Matt handled the radio communications. They drove to the Palmdale City Park on 10th Street East and parked the pickup. They’d removed the bulb from the interior light and drove without headlights. When they arrived, the 10 men set out for the Civic Center 2 blocks away and Ron donned the headset.

Ron thought he heard a couple of screams, but from two blocks away, he didn’t hear a single gunshot. The 10 men were back in 30 minutes and they had 12 AK’s, 2 RPG launchers and about 2-dozen of the RPG’s. They were also lugging several cases of ammo and had the UN troops’ web gear hanging off their shoulders. There was more, they said, did Ron feel like risking driving closer to the Civic Center?

What the hell, Ron figured, we could use the stuff. He drove to the Library parking lot and they loaded more stuff in the back of the pickup. They were back at Gary’s compound by 1 am. They had the weapons mentioned plus a third RPG launcher, more ammo, more RPG’s and some grenades. No one had ever seen that particular type of grenade, but it didn’t take them too long to figure out how they worked.

The UN troops must have been checking out Palmdale pretty good, the next day, the gas, water and power went out. Gary contacted the Ham in Lancaster who had helped him set up his radios. There were only 2 Platoons of troops in Lancaster, one at the Sheriff’s Department at Sierra Highway and Lancaster Boulevard, and another out by the K-Mart store on 20<sup>th</sup> Street west.

Gary was assured that the two Platoons would be history by the next day. If that were the case, the three men decided, the UN would be down to 2¾ Platoons at the Mall. The reinforcements hadn't arrived yet. Of the 8 Platoons of troops the UN had started out with, 3 had been taken out when they arrived in the Antelope Valley days before. One squad had been taken out the previous night. That left the 2 Platoons in Lancaster and the 2¾ Platoons at the Mall. If the UN sent a squad or two to the Civic Center, maybe they could whittle down the UN forces some more.

In Lancaster, the home of many of the AV militia groups, the 2 platoons were taken out after fierce firefights. The Lancaster groups lost several killed and wounded, but they'd taken out the UN people and had recovered the usual assortment of weapons plus 4 mortars. It was quite a haul but expensive considering the loss of life.

In Palmdale, the UN had moved the remainder of the Platoon, 3 squads, to the Civic Center. They put out perimeter guards and fortunately someone spotted the glow of a cigarette and pounded on the roof of the pickup. Ron stopped as quickly as he could, avoiding screeching the tires. This time, Ron had the FAL in the rifle rack in his rear window. They stopped further away and quickly agreed to take out the perimeter guards with knives, if possible. This was easy in the movies, but pretty difficult in real life. What they needed were some suppressed handguns.

There was a whole squad spread out as sentries. It took the better part of an hour to take them all out. A couple had to be shot with the suppressed A2's, the people simply couldn't get close enough to use a knife. One of those that had been shot must have had his safety off and his finger on the trigger, he let loose with a burst when he was hit.

They had discussed this eventuality at length. Hunker down and remain in place was the instruction. The UN forces went on alert at the sound of the gunshots. The two Platoons at the Mall couldn't reinforce them; they were almost to Lancaster on their way to reinforce those two Platoons. As the forces sped north to Lancaster on the 14 Freeway, rifle fire and RPG's, courtesy of the two overrun Platoons, hit them. They lost half their number.

At the Civic Center, the people from Moon Shadows had the advantage of the darkness. Although outnumbered 2 to 1, they plinked away at the remaining UN troops, getting one here, and another there. After an hour of this activity, they had the odds even, 1:1.

They slowly moved in and found better vantage points from which to snipe/plink. It took them another hour and half to finish off the remaining UN squad. None of them had been killed or wounded, although several people had close calls. They gathered up the weapons and munitions and wearily headed back to Moon Shadows. When they got back, Gary was on the radio talking to the Ham in Lancaster. They had taken out the 2 platoons and even got a bonus Platoon on the Freeway. That left the UN with but a single Platoon to guard the entire Antelope Valley.

The radio conversation went on at some length. The Lancaster people had 6 mortars now. Apparently each Platoon had 2. Ron brought in the two mortars they'd picked up at the Civic Center and Gary relayed the info to Lancaster. They had the mortars, but no one in Moon Shadows had the slightest idea how to use one. Gary also relayed that information to Lancaster. Lancaster told Gary they had several vets in their groups and they could come to Palmdale and either operate the mortars or teach the Moon Shadows people how to use them.

Chris related the events at the Civic Center to the three old Geezers. They had been pretty lucky not getting their butts shot off, but everyone had followed instructions and had kept their heads down. They had to use one of the UN Utility Vehicles to haul their salvage this night; it was more than the pickup would hold. Gary told Udell to get off his dead butt and dispose of that vehicle, it was a red flag. David and Udell grabbed some fresh mags and set off to dump the truck. They began to plan the defense of Palmdale against the reinforcements that they were sure would be coming. Chris said count him out, he needed some sleep.

Strangely, the UN had bypassed Edwards AFB. Maybe that was because Edwards was a flight test center and didn't typically have fighter or bomber aircraft assigned to it. Gary had been at Edwards during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Normally, the base didn't have fighters and bombers, but during the crisis, there had been a bunch of B-47's parked at the end of the runway loaded with bombs. The UN should have known that! The British did, and at this very moment, they had ferried squadrons of fighters and bombers to Edwards. They were so happy to have the French turned to crispy critters they willingly joined the American effort.

A very small detachment of 4 SAS moved into Lancaster and then down to Moon Shadows. These Limeys knew how to use the mortars and they agreed with the plan the three old civilians had hatched. The men thought the best bet was to evacuate Littlerock and set up a mortar ambush on the west side of the small town. They had the RPG's too and if they were good enough for the Iraqis to kill hundreds of Americans, they were good enough to kill the UN reinforcements.

The Lancaster people were to block the 14 Freeway just where it entered the Antelope Valley and to the north in the Rosamond area. There was that S curve on the north side of Rosamond that made a perfect ambush area. A third group of Lancaster militia would set up an ambush on Avenue D 10 miles to the west to cut off any reinforcements that came in from I-5. The SAS would provide one person to each ambush team and would command the units. And, "don't call us Limeys!"

Dick managed to restore the natural gas; the UN had simply cut off a main valve. Water couldn't be restored until they could get the electricity back on. The men were sharing the drinking water with the neighbors and Ron told them to help themselves to his swimming pool for water for their toilets. Gary gave them the 6 new trashcans to haul water. The neighbors got the idea and went to Albertsons, Stater Brothers and Wal-Mart for more trash cans. The three stores had been pretty thoroughly ransacked (looted) but

they found some food items and plenty of trashcans. They made several trips to Ron's and pretty soon all 40 of the other homes had two large trashcans full of water for the stools and one can with drinking water. Food was a bit of a problem, unless you liked beans and rice. But, they did find some infant formula for the babies.

The men distributed the AK's to the neighbor's, but cautioned them to keep the weapons on semi-automatic. Only someone with the proper training should use the rifles on full auto and they didn't have the time to train them. The full auto position on an AK was half the way up, opposite from the M-16. And they didn't really have the skills, either; that was something those SAS boys could do if they had time.

All-in-all the three old farts were doing pretty good for a bunch of armchair survivalists. They still had Ron and Clarence's gasoline generators so they had loaned them out to people to keep their refrigerators going. They also unhooked the 2 backup 12kw generators and set one on Stardust Place and one on Northstar. Chris had several long extension cords and Gary had his two 100 footers. Ron had 2 of the 100' cords too. What they were short were soon salvaged from Wal-Mart. [Make fun of Wal-Mart all you want. Who cares where the extension cords were made?]

The principal UN force was over in the Inland Empire (San Bernardino) area. The British and American fighters out of Edwards were pounding them unmercifully. While Edwards had a fair supply of fuel, it was short on ordinance. Some of the Galaxy C-5s soon remedied that problem.

Most of the UN troops on the west coast were Chinese and Koreans. The Mexicans, apparently ungrateful that we employed half their population, had attacked through the Sonoran Desert and had overrun Tucson and Phoenix and were attacking Flagstaff. The American and British Air Forces were slowly wearing the enemy down, but it looked like the war would last for a while. Derek's armored unit was a part of the 7th Cavalry and they had been moved southwest to battle the Mexicans.

The UN was hard pressed to supply reinforcements to the Antelope Valley. They released one company from San Bernardino and they made their way north to highway 138 and west towards Palmdale, right into the ambush west of Littlerock. The convoy was strung out all the way from Pearblossom to Littlerock. The only change the SAS fella had made to the three old Geezers plans was to put 2 RPG teams in Pearblossom. When they heard the explosions from 5 miles away, the two teams began to pour RPG's into the tail end of the convoy, cutting off their retreat. They didn't even wait for the radio call on the backpack radio. By the time it came, they had taken out 3 UN vehicles. Later that night at Gary's Ron was belly aching about the attack on the Company of UN soldiers.

"I'm just saying that I wished they hadn't destroyed so many of their vehicles," Ron repeated, "We could have used more of the RPG's."

“But we salvaged so much ammo and 177 rifles, Ron,” Clarence said. “40 RPG’s is nothing to sneeze at. Besides, we got more mortars and mortar rounds.”

“That’s right Ron,” Gary said, “No one killed and only 7 wounded. I’d say we did all right.”

I see that Adelphia is back on the air,” Clarence added, “At least we can get some news.”

“You call that news?” Gary blurted out. “I sort of miss old Wolf Blitzer and his putting a spin on every story. These guys just report the facts.”

“I would have thought you’d be overjoyed,” Ron said, “No more speculation and hype and creating news were none existed.”

“I am,” Gary said, “But these people are so bland. Couldn’t they at least show a little emotion?”

“Watch it Clarence,” Ron said, “The next thing you know Gar-Bear will be saying something nice about lawyers or politicians.”

“I’d shoot myself first,” Gary retorted. “What’s the situation on the electricity? Does anyone know when the lights are coming back on?”

“Parts of Palmdale are already on Gary,” Clarence announced. “We should have water tomorrow and lights the next day.”

“We need to top off the propane tanks and get some of those 25-gallon bottles in case we have to provide electricity to the whole neighborhood again,” Gary suggested. “Why doesn’t someone run me down to AmeriGas on 6th Street east and I’ll bring a 3,000-gallon truck over and top off the tanks tomorrow,” Ron suggested.

“If they don’t have enough 25-gallon bottles, Ron, that place down on Sierra Highway where I used to fill my 5-gallon bottles had a small shed full of 5, 10 and 25-gallon bottles,” Gary added.

“Maybe I should top us off and go back and refill the truck,” Ron suggested. “Wouldn’t hurt to have an extra 3,000-gallons of propane sitting here say at the end of the street.”

“Go ahead if you want to Ron,” Gary replied, “But park that truck somewhere else. If it were to blow up, we’d be in a world of hurts.”

“Oh, like we wouldn’t if those 6 tanks in the backyard went up?” Ron laughed.

“That’s different,” Gary said.

“Yeah right, partner,” Ron shook his head.

The water came back on the next day just as Clarence said it would. They stationed kids on the top of the tanks to screw down the vent caps when the tanks got full. Well, most of Palmdale had electricity, but where was theirs? Ron had closed off the valves to five of the six tanks and filled them. He then filled all of the 5, 10 and 25-gallon bottles he had gathered in from AmeriGas and the place down on Sierra highway. He ran out of propane and returned to AmeriGas to refill the truck. By the time he got back, the lights were on so he topped off the 6th tank and refilled the remaining empty bottles. He made one last trip to AmeriGas to top off the truck and take someone to drive back his pickup.

They had plenty of spare parts, oil and filters for the 3 12kw generators. They would get Chris to service them the next day. Meanwhile, he serviced his own 6kw generator and started in on Ron and Clarence’s 6kw units. Better to have them ready when they were needed. Matt went around the neighborhood and collected the extension cords. They wanted them centralized for the next time they were needed, too.

They were literally drowning in AK’s. Every person in the housing tract had one and plenty of mags and ammo. They ended up storing several under the slab after cleaning and oiling them. These were the best of the lot and all AK-47’s of relatively recent manufacture. They didn’t care for the AK-74’s and they were the first guns they distributed along with the .22 caliber (5.45x39mm) Russian ammo.

The captured grenades seemed to explode just fine and the RPG’s were lighter than the American equivalents. The RPG’s seemed to be about the equal of the discontinued American M72 LAW rockets. (Actually the Russian RPG-18 was their version of the M-72 LAW) What they wouldn’t give for a supply of those.

If the ATF had any idea that they had 3 14” shotguns, 3 12” shotguns, 10 A2’s with suppressors, and over a hundred AK-47’s under the slab, the AFT would probably lock them up and throw away the key. Hells, bells, California hadn’t repealed its stupid law and all of those high capacity magazines would be enough to land them in jail. There was no way either agency would have stood still for them having explosive devices in the form of grenades, RPG’s and mortars. “Yeah, well, screw ‘em if they can’t take a joke,” Gary thought.

The Russian produced mortars with Russian instructions were written using the Cyrillic alphabet. William Smith from Red Dawn was never around when you needed him! And not one in this group of ours spoke Russian or could read the language. Plan B, trial and error!

You would not have thought it, but the US and the British were winning the war. It always came back to logistics. In a survival situation, the survivalist who succeeded frequently was the scavenger. That was logistics.

Napoleon had said an Army traveled on its stomach. That was logistics. Guns took cartridges and shells and tanks took fuel. That was logistics. The remaining American and the British submarines had cordoned off the US. There was no way for any ship to get through with matériel.

Aircraft that tried to deliver supplies by air were shot down. People never seemed to learn the lessons of history. The US Army when faced with the same problem during World War II had created the famous Red Ball Express. And, late in the war, the U-boat blockade of the Atlantic had faltered and failed. The Americans and the British had no such problems; they were sinking the supply convoys in record numbers.

So, even before the war ended, many began to speculate what was winning the war. Was it the submarine blockade of America? Was it the superior Abrams tanks? Was it the dogged determination of the American Infantry man and women? Was it the American militias? The answer was simply yes to all of the above. Anything that caused the UN forces to expend their dwindling supplies was helping win the war.

The Patriots and their guerilla warfare tactics unnerved the UN forces and caused them to waste precious ammunition. Fire control seemed to evaporate when someone was shooting at you. The American Infantry was better armed and better trained and had the most recent fighting experience in the Middle East. They were 3 times as effective as most of their adversaries.

The only tanks that could hold a candle to the Abrams M1A2SEP were the German tanks, British tanks and French tanks and the Germans had been reluctant to commit all of their tanks to the war effort. The Chinese T-98 tanks were pretty good, but the Americans had superior shells for their 120mm cannons and the T-98's exploded with just as big a bang as the T-72's in Iraq. The Chinese counter fire was something to be reckoned with, but the Americans used hit and run tactics, often firing the tanks' guns while the tanks' were moving at a pretty fast clip. The gunners just loved that SEP upgrade.

With the superior Russian submarines all lying at the bottom of the ocean, the Los Angeles, Seawolf and Virginia class submarines had no equal. Well, maybe the British, but they were on our side. The 688I class submarines were a true wonder as were the later generations of submarines. Sure, the voyages were longer than normal patrols, but this was war. The commanders of the submarines let the men party it up as much as they could when they pulled along a re-supply ship. Everyone got a brief chance to release the tension.

The Germans were the first to surrender to the Americans and British. They knew they were licked and rather than hold out and incur even greater American wrath, they quite simply surrendered.

Several of the smaller nations followed the Germans' lead. One nation held out. There was no way the French were going to surrender. Some idiot had let loose their nuclear weapons on America. They figured their lives weren't worth a plug nickel (or some simi-

lar French expression). They had no home to go back to, the 90 American warheads had functioned flawlessly and France wouldn't even be able to grow grapes for the next 50 years. Neither could one eat the cheese, assuming there were any cows left, it would be full of Strontium-90. Not necessarily the bravest of the brave, the French knew how to fight, if not bathe, and they fought until they ran out of ammunition.

If you think Americans might have abused prisoners in Iraq, you might be right, but the French learned a whole new definition of abuse. The Patriots simply shot the French at first. Then they developed a game, standing a dozen Frenchmen up before a firing squad and putting a blank cartridge in one of the rifles. Who was going to be lucky and get to not get shot? If you made it through three firing squads alive, you got to live. One lucky fellow made it through all three times. But, he had a particular aversion to soap and the southern militiamen used Tide and scrub brushes on him until his flesh was a healthy pink. Or, was that red from all the blood seeping from places they'd scrubbed particularly hard?

In Palmdale, the ATF came through to collect all of the war souvenirs. The neighbors all turned in their AK's like good little sheeple. Clarence and Ron and Gary turned in the RPG's and mortars, but they all had bolt action rifles and pump shotguns and revolvers. You couldn't have squeezed another rifle or grenade into the hidey-hole under the slab. Automatic weapons?

Yep we captured some, but we gave them all to the neighbors. Grenades? Nope, we didn't take any of those, they're illegal explosive devices. Here, take these RPG's and mortars; we have no need for them. Missing weapons from the CNG Armory? Must have been someone else, what would we do with LAW rockets?

Even an armchair survivalist can make it when push comes to shove. They might not be young and healthy, but they're old and cunning and devious and probably accomplished liars. They know when to push and when to yield; and if they really want something then screw the law. Besides, there's always that walker in the garage or the cane that generally hung unused on the fireplace mantle that they could grab and fake a limp.

They could live on chili for months at a time. What movie was it that the lead actor claimed chili was the perfect food? Oh, that's right, it wasn't a movie it was a TV show. Detective Robert T. Ironside claimed that chili was the perfect food.

So ends the brief story of the three old Geezers in Palmdale. They didn't have a lot of money, but they made do with what they had. They hadn't put a RV pump on their water supply to boost the pressure, they used less when they bathed with the lowered water pressure and the tank on the stools just took longer to fill. They hadn't kept a large supply of survival food on hand, but kept what they ate and ate what they'd kept. Oh, they finally gave in and bought from Walton's, eventually.



The American Navy recovered one of the Russian submarines. They developed a new generation of submarines that could operate at 1,200 meters and down to 1,500 in a pinch. The American reactors made them work even better than the French reactors. The German propellers were pretty good and they refined them until they could pass SOSUS at 20 knots without being detected. They gave the new submarines a new name, too. They called them the Holbrook class. They were named after a small town in northeastern Arizona.

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